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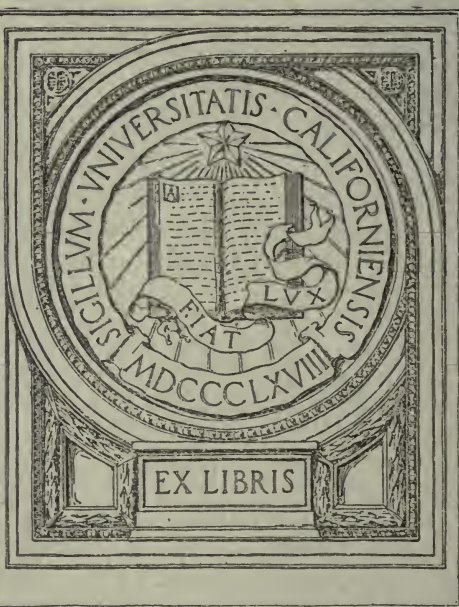
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THE REORGANISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

Being a Series of Essays prepared by
CAPTAIN C. M. LLOYD for a Conference
of the Labour Research Department, together
with an Introduction by SIDNEY WEBB

With an Appendix giving a report of the
Labour Research Department Conference
on 15th, 16th and 17th May, 1919.
Chairman: Rt. Hon. J. R. CLYNES, M.P.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE COMING REVOLUTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. By Mr. SIDNEY WEBB	I
THE REORGANISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT. By Captain C. M. LLOYD	7
SECTION I. Public Health and Housing	7
II. The Sick and Infirm and Mentally Deficient	13
III. Education (Boarding and Nursery Schools, etc.)	21
IV. Unemployment	25
V. Constitutional Problems	30
APPENDIX: Report of the Labour Research Department Conference on May 15th, 16th and 17th	43

THE COMING REVOLUTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Address by Mr. SIDNEY WEBB

A GREAT war, it seems, must always be followed by a revolution. The disturbance of values, ideas and social relations is so great that it is impossible for any country to revert to the former state of things. It depends on the good sense and practical wisdom of the whole nation what shall be the form and method—even how great shall be the scope—of such a revolution. We may so guide the new forces and desires that they will not shatter more of the old than we wish to get rid of. The danger is always that we may “empty the baby out with the bath.”

Now, so far as our own country is concerned, one small department of this social revolution which the Great War is producing is that which we call Local Government; and we are here, in this Conference, to take counsel together as to the way in which we may safely and successfully accomplish the task. The Ministry of Health is virtually established. Its first great duty, for which there will be a Bill in Parliament next Session, will be to reorganise throughout England and Wales the whole provision, which the various Local Authorities already so largely make for the prevention and treatment of disease, and the necessary public care of the infirm of all kinds. And this involves, so the Cabinet has decided, not only the abolition of the Boards of Guardians and the Workhouse, but also the abolition of the Poor Law itself. To this programme the Government is pledged and the Ministry of Health is definitely committed; neither of them will dare to go back on it. It must necessarily amount to a revolutionary change in the organisation and working of our Local Governing Bodies. We are here to consider during these three days, in a dozen separate sittings, the various developments involved in this momentous revolution.

Our existing Local Government, though it has its roots in our oldest history, is, in its present main features, quite a young thing—its years are little over four-score. It had its birth in the revolutionary changes of 1834-5, which took a good many years to work out. Since then there have been three extraordinary spasms of new growth; in 1870, when the School Boards were established; in 1888, when the County Councils were born, and 1902-3, when the educational work was re-united with what I may call the municipal organisation. We are now plunging into the convulsions of a fourth spasm, incident on a great expansion and improvement of the public provision for those in need of one or other form of civic help, notably in respect of sickness; and this fourth spasm, I venture to predict, will result in even bigger changes, and I hope in much greater benefits to the mass of the people, than any of the former three.

We shall be the better prepared for the discussions in the separate sessions devoted to particular subjects if we consider a little how this fourth great spasm of growth in our Local Government system is coming about. We are nearly all of us tired of the Poor Law, and angry with its fundamental assumptions, which were so decisively condemned by the Poor Law Commission of 1905-9, Majority as well as Minority. But this decisive condemnation, in which public opinion certainly concurred, did not lead Mr. Asquith's Government to abolish the Poor Law; and I fancy that there are still many zealous Poor Law Guardians who cannot understand why what satisfied Mr. Asquith's Government should not still be able to stave off any drastic change. What has caused the present Cabinet to decide for abolition is the urgent necessity of re-organising the provision for the sick. This cannot be done in any other way than by taking the sick out of the Poor Law. Three-quarters of a century ago this would not have mattered to the Boards of Guardians, who were occupied almost entirely with the relief of the able-bodied. Nowadays the care of the sick and the infirm accounts for more than two-thirds of their expenditure. To take the sick and the feeble-minded out of the Poor Law is, so far as four-fifths of the Poor Law Unions are concerned, to knock the bottom out of the Workhouse, and, indeed, of the whole Poor Law System as it has developed to-day. Now that the County Boroughs and County Councils provide for the lunatics and mentally defective; give Old Age Pensions to persons over 70; educate nearly all the children in their schools; even feed them when they are found to be hungry, and see to the medical treatment of their ailments; and are certain to become more and more responsible for the able-bodied unemployed, not even the most conservative-minded statesman could keep the Boards of Guardians in existence once the sick and infirm were withdrawn from them. If all the persons needing medical attendance and nursing are taken out of the Poor Law, the Boards of Guardians—and all the army of officials that they have to maintain—would find themselves with next to nothing to do. A separate organisation could no longer be kept up.

Why must all the sick and infirm of all kinds, including maternity and infancy, and the aged and feeble-minded needing nursing care, be taken out of the Poor Law? The reason is twofold. The first answer is because of overlapping. There are now three separate and very costly public organisations in each place charged with dealing with disease and the sick. The Board of Guardians has to provide for all the sick and infirm, whatever their ailments, who are technically destitute. The Town or District Council has to provide for persons suffering from a steadily growing list of diseases, whatever the patients' affluence, and is now charged to provide for maternity and infancy, irrespective of destitution. The Local Insurance Committee also has to provide in its own very costly way for all the sick persons who are insured—that is to say, three-fourths of all the heads of households and one-third of the whole population—whether or not they are destitute. There are, accordingly, in every well-managed district three separate medical services, three staffs, even three series of expensive institutions, all maintained at vast expense out

of the same fund of rates and taxes, to deal with what are, to a very large and ever-increasing extent, the same sick people. The first condition of any really effective campaign for the prevention of disease, of any really adequate provision of expert medical treatment and nursing, of any satisfactory dealing with maternity and infancy, not to mention other urgent needs, is to have in each locality one public authority, and one only, responsible for everything done out of the rates and taxes that involves a doctor, a nurse, or a hospital.

The second answer is hard for the old Poor Law Guardian to understand, because it is a modern idea, which few people appreciate in all its thoroughness. The Poor Law, by its very nature, even under the very best Board of Guardians, cannot deal properly with disease as we now wish it to be dealt with, namely, from the standpoint of prevention. It can very seldom get the cases early enough. This is partly owing to the stigma and disgrace attendant on Poor Law relief, which the Local Government Board and the nation, for three-quarters of a century, deliberately fostered. It is very largely due to the atmosphere of deterrence with which the Boards of Guardians and the Relieving Officers have nearly everywhere surrounded themselves, in order to stave off applicants. Nowadays, when many Poor Law Guardians have changed their minds, and would like to get rid of the stigma and the deterrence, they are unable to do so. Very few people go for the first time to the Relieving Officer without shame and repugnance; or come before the Board without a feeling of disgrace. Hence no sick person comes for help until he is absolutely compelled to do so. When the sick person at last consents to apply, it may not be too late for the patching up with medicines and dressings which is all that the sick person expects, and all that the Poor Law aims at doing, but it is too late for really preventive treatment. But even if this deterrence could be altered, it would still be impossible for the Poor Law to have any proper system of dealing with sickness, because we now see that this depends on the earliest possible treatment. It is the fundamental principle of the Poor Law that it can deal only with the destitute when they have become destitute, and for as long as only they are destitute. When sickness is just beginning—the very time when the doctor should be called in—there is usually no destitution. By the time the patient is so bad as to be unable to go to his work, and destitution sets in, the case has often become irremediable. It is just as if a hospital was debarred from treating any wound until gangrene had set in. If we are going to spend public money on a large and very costly campaign against disease, we must not only get rid of the waste of overlapping services, but also take care that our money is applied in the right way, for prevention as well as for treatment. We must, therefore, disconnect our public provision for the sick from any connection whatsoever with the Poor Law, and deal with all patients, not as paupers to be deterred, but as citizens to be encouraged to use the public medical service and the public hospital with no more shame or reluctance than they use the Post Office or the Council School. This can never be done under even the best administered Poor Law.

But the reason for the abolition of the Poor Law itself is not merely the practical one that it is impossible to maintain the Workhouses, and the separate Poor Law organisation once the sick and infirm are removed from its care. The whole Poor Law organisation, which is still costing for the United Kingdom somewhere about seventeen million pounds per annum, has become redundant. During the past half century there has gradually grown up another way of dealing, out of public money, for every one of the various classes of persons whom the community has to help. In an ordinary County Borough, such as Manchester or Leeds, the Town Council now provides for maternity and infancy; for the education and even the maintenance and medical treatment of children of school age; for everything required by various large classes of the sick of all ages; for the lunatics, mentally defective, and feeble-minded; for the pensionable aged, and for the able-bodied unemployed. But these are all the classes that the Board of Guardians provides for! The overlapping has become universal. We cannot go on with the waste involved in maintaining in every town duplicate staffs and duplicate institutions, at the expense of the rates and taxes, for all the several classes for which we provide help; one set for those who are technically destitute and who are stigmatised as paupers, and another set for those who are not so stigmatised and are welcomed as citizens—especially when it is often a matter of chance which are dealt with in one way and which in the other. If we are to have economy and efficiency in our Local Government, we must either merge the municipal services in those of the Poor Law or merge the services of the Poor Law in those of the municipality. There can be no doubt which of these alternatives will be chosen.

Observe, what is in question is a merging of services, a union of staffs and institutions, not merely a transfer of this or that work from the Board of Guardians to the Town Council. Many a zealous and humane Poor Law Guardian is honestly puzzled why it should be supposed that the Councillor will do the work better than he does; and how it can be imagined that a committee of the Town Council will necessarily be more efficient or kinder to the poor than a modern committee of the Board of Guardians? It is, however, not a question of merely substituting one directly-elected body for another, or one committee for another. It is merging the Poor Law medical staff and the Poor Law infirmary in the larger and more comprehensive Public Health Service of the municipality, which will have its series of properly classified hospitals, maternity clinics and infant nurseries, dispensaries, sanatoria, convalescent homes and homes of refuge for the chronic invalids and the infirm aged. It is a merging of the separate Poor Law schools or cottage homes, and all the boarding-out, in the wider and more specialised educational system which the Council maintains for all the children and young persons. It is a merging of the all-too-scanty Poor Law provision for the feeble-minded in the more extensive and more expert provision that the Council makes for the mentally defective of all grades. With regard to the able-bodied the idea is—we must say frankly—a definite rejection of all the ways in which the Poor Law deals with the man physically and mentally

able to work, who is destitute through inability to obtain employment, and the commission to the Council, by the agency of a new committee on which organised labour must be specially represented, of the whole problem of how best to prevent unemployment (a subject which has always been quite outside the Guardians' scope), and where it is not prevented, to find either work or maintenance for the unemployed.

Any such prevention of overlapping and merging of service necessarily involves an identity of areas. The 650 or so Poor Law Unions will need to be sorted out into the 300 and odd boroughs and districts which are populous and important enough to have both Local Health and Local Education Authorities. For London, where the municipal work is shared between the County Council and the Metropolitan Borough Councils (including the City Corporation), the present functions of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and the Boards of Guardians would naturally be divided on similar lines. One of the most difficult problems for which the Conference has to find a solution is how, in the rural counties, the work should be divided between the County Council and those who will have to act in the different localities.

Now I venture to put it to you that this necessity for a thorough-going alteration in what are now the Poor Law areas—far from being a drawback—is a positive advantage. Almost any such change of areas will be an improvement. If we want to get rid of the associations of the Poor Law, nothing will be so helpful as to get rid of the old areas and even their old names. These Union areas have, indeed, one capital drawback. They were mostly laid out three-quarters of a century ago, *before the establishment of railways*; and they often do not correspond to-day either with the spread of population or convenience of locomotion. There may be cases in which the adjustment of the Poor Law to the municipal areas will be a change for the worse. But they will be few, and the remedy is, then, to improve the municipal area.

This is the answer to the complaint of that entirely exceptional Board of Guardians, that of West Ham, which governs the paupers of a population of over three-quarters of a million, and is destined to see its services dispersed among several smaller municipal areas. Why, it is asked, should not the West Ham Board of Guardians, which prides itself on the excellence of its administration, be specially continued in existence under the new system? Such a question indicates a lack of appreciation of what is proposed. The main object of the change is the unification of services. To let the West Ham Board of Guardians continue to provide separately for its pauper sick; keep its own maternity ward for its pauper mothers, and its own workhouse nursery for its pauper babies; maintain its pauper children in its own pauper schools; keep in its workhouse its various grades of mentally defective paupers; maintain separately its pauper aged; and keep up its own methods of treatment of its pauper able-bodied, whom a failure to prevent the occurrence of unemployment drives to Poor Law relief—when all the time the West Ham Town Council is maintaining also its separate hospitals and sanatoria, maternity clinics and infant nurseries, schools and asylums, with all their varied

staffs—does not seem either economical or desirable. But there is a decisive reason why no such continuance of any particular Board of Guardian is possible. Under what statutory powers would it propose to act? The West Ham Guardians do not seem to realise that the union of all the separate Poor Law services with those of the municipality *in itself necessarily involves the repeal of all the Poor Law Statutes, and the dropping of all the existing Poor Law Orders*, which will cease to be applicable. It is not suggested that any of the *powers* of the Guardians should be transferred to the Town Councils—these powers will simply cease and determine. The Town Council will take over the services of the Guardians and administer them under the Town Council's existing powers, the Public Health, Education, Lunacy, Unemployment and other Acts, which will need only slight amendment to enable this to be done. It need hardly be observed that any other course would meet with a storm of opposition. No Town Council would consent for a moment to come under the terribly out-of-date Poor Law Statutes and Poor Law Orders, with their stigma and odium, and with the subjection that they involve to the meticulous supervision and peremptory commands of the Local Government Board. Every Town Council will naturally deal with the sick under the Public Health Acts, and with the children under the Education Acts. When the transfer of the Poor Law services is made, the Poor Law will cease to exist. Would the West Ham Guardians wish their territory to be a Poor Law island, where alone pauperism would survive under Local Government Board Orders from which every other locality was free, not sharing in the new and enlarged grants which the Health, Education, Lunacy, Employment and other Local Authorities will be enjoying?

One final word. Will the change anywhere raise the rates? On the face of it, no. The Council's rate will no doubt go up, but the Poor Rate will cease altogether. Of course, we cannot effect a vast improvement in the prevention and treatment of disease, and in the care of the infants, the children, the mentally defective, the aged and the unemployed without increasing the expense. But the Government has already promised a complete revision of the Grants in Aid which, so far as Health and Education are concerned, will be largely increased. With the cessation of the grants now made to the Boards of Guardians, the new grants will have to be so adjusted as to provide that in no place, not even in the West Ham Union, shall the abolition of the Poor Law involve any increase in the rates. It is for the Conference, in its separate sessions, to bring to bear on the details of this great reform the knowledge and experience that its expert membership can contribute. I believe I may safely say that its deliberations, and also any conclusions that it may formulate, will certainly obtain the most careful consideration at the hands of the Ministry of Health.

THE REORGANISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SECTION I

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOUSING

THE PRESENT POSITION

IT is interesting to note that it was primarily in order to prevent destitution that the Local Health Authority in England was called into existence. It was as Secretary to the Poor Law Commission that Edwin Chadwick in 1838 drew the attention of the Government to the need for what we should now call Public Health powers; and described as "the most prominent and pressing" of all Poor Law reforms, "the means of averting the charges on the Poor Rates which are caused by nuisances by which contagion is generated, and persons are reduced to destitution." From this impulse sprang the four great Reports of the Poor Law Commission on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population (1842), the Royal Commission on the Health of Towns (1842-5), the Removal of Nuisances Act of 1846, and the Public Health Act of 1848. The problem of the "housing of the poor," as it was then called, began to be dealt with simultaneously, and a thin stream of legislation—Labouring Classes' Dwelling Houses Acts, Labouring Classes' Lodging Houses Acts, Artizans and Labourers' Dwellings' Improvements Acts, and so on—trickled out, culminating in what seemed at the time, at any rate, a comprehensive measure, the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890. In the period immediately preceding the war it was officially estimated that from one-third to one-half of all the public expenditure in relief of destitution was due to sickness—one-seventh of it, indeed, to tuberculosis alone. And of this sickness no small proportion is the result of bad housing conditions.

(i) THE LAW

(a) *Public Health generally.*—So far as the law is concerned, very extensive powers have been given for the prevention of disease. By the Public Health Act of 1875 (for London, the Public Health Act of 1891), together with the Acts amending the same—sadly needing, by the way, an early codification—Parliament has made it everywhere obligatory for a periodical inspection of the whole district to be made, in order that no unhealthy conditions may be suffered to exist; for whatever sewers and house-drains are necessary to be compulsorily and universally provided and kept in a proper state; for every dwelling to be properly constructed, not over-crowded, and kept without any nuisance injurious to health; for the universal provision of at least a minimum of sanitary accommodation, to be kept in good order; for a proper water supply to

every dwelling wherever this is reasonably practicable; for systematic collective arrangements to be made for the removal of house refuse and filth, and the cleansing and disinfecting of any dwellings found to be in an unwholesome state; for the insistence upon special requirements to prevent disease with regard to all underground dwellings, common lodging-houses, houses let in tenements, factories and workshops, bakeries and slaughterhouses, and all unhealthy trades; and for steps to be taken to prevent the continuance anywhere or under any circumstances of any nuisance injurious to health. Wide powers of inspection and enforcement of sanitary conditions are given with regard to meat, milk, and other food, and the places where it is dealt with, and for the making of bye-laws imposing sanitary regulations upon the whole population. Food is inspected at its source by Local Sanitary Authorities, and at its port of entry by Port Authorities; in its distribution by Local Sanitary Authorities and Police. Births and infancy are looked after by Local Sanitary Authorities under several statutes; health at school by Education Authorities (under the new Act by the Local Health Authorities); and health in factories and workshops by the Home Office and Local Sanitary Authorities. Extensive powers are given for the provision, at the public expense and for common use, of sewers, pavements, water supply, lighting, cleansing and scavenging of every description, public baths and washhouses, parks and open spaces, playgrounds, markets, mortuaries, cemeteries, sanitary conveniences, ambulances, disinfection places, hospitals (including out-patients' departments or dispensaries) for any or all diseases, baby clinics, home nursing, food for expectant and nursing mothers and children under five years of age, and even (but only temporarily) a supply of medicine and medical assistance for the poorer inhabitants.

Similar powers as regards Scotland are contained in the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, the Burgh Police (Scotland) Acts, 1892 and 1903, and other statutes.

The National Insurance Acts, 1911 to 1918, far-reaching as they are, deal with sickness in a remedial rather than a preventive way, except for the powers given to Insurance Committees to arrange for Sanatorium treatment and to organise lectures and public information relating to health.

So far as general words can go in statutory form, the powers available to prevent the occurrence of disease, and to deal with it effectively when it does occur, appear to be ample. But experience proves them to fall short, in this or that detail, at many points. Much of what is merely optional has not been put in force. Even what is nominally obligatory and compulsory is, here and there, not in existence.

(b) *Housing*.—The principal powers and duties of the Local Authorities are contained in the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, and the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909. Every Local Health Authority must cause its district to be inspected from time to time, to see if any dwelling is unfit for human habitation. In the case of a working-class house—(*i.e.*, in London a house of the value of £40 a year or less,

in English and Welsh towns with over 50,000 population, £26, and in Scotland and elsewhere in England and Wales, £16)—the Local Authority may order the landlord to put it in habitable condition, or, in default, carry out the necessary repairs at his expense, or it may issue a closing order, and three months later, a demolition order. In the case of large slum areas (*i.e.*, more than 10 houses), an urban Local Authority may make an "improvement scheme," and clear and reconstruct the area, but, unless the obligation is remitted by the Central Authority, must provide new accommodation for the dishoused persons on the same site or in its immediate vicinity. Powers are also given to prepare and carry out Town Planning schemes.

Thus it will be seen that, so far as the law is concerned, there is nothing to prevent a Local Authority from ridding itself of slums, building or owning municipal houses and laying out its area in the manner most conducive to health, convenience and amenity. But mere statutory permission has not proved sufficient. In practice there has been much to discourage and deter the Local Authorities from dealing boldly with the problem of housing.

(ii) THE AUTHORITIES

Everywhere, in England and Wales, the Authority for putting both the sanitary and housing laws in force is a Council directly elected by the ratepayers of its district (including women under the Representation of the People Act, 1918), either annually by thirds, or triennially *en bloc*. This elected Council, referred to as the Local Health Authority, is, in all the 80 County Boroughs the entirely autonomous County Borough Council. In London, the Public Health powers are shared between (a) the London County Council, (b) the Metropolitan Asylums Board, which is essentially a Public Health Authority, and (c) the City Corporation and the 28 Metropolitan Borough Councils. Outside London and the County Boroughs the County Council has now certain responsibilities and powers with regard to the health of the whole county. But subject to a supervision by the County Council—which is, notwithstanding the provisions of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909, still somewhat vaguely defined—the Local Health Authority is the Council of either (a) the Non-County Borough, (b) the Urban District, or (c) the Rural District. The members of the Rural District Council are also *ex-officio* Guardians of the Poor for the Poor Law Union in which the Rural District is situated, but the two bodies are entirely distinct. In the service of every Local Health Authority (including now every County) there must be a qualified Medical Officer of Health, with whatever sanitary and administrative staff is necessary. The Local Health Authorities receive Grants in Aid in respect of certain services from the Exchequer, and are now responsible to the new Minister of Health.

In Scotland, the Local Authorities, for the purposes of the administration of the Housing and Public Health Acts, are in Counties (exclusive of Burghs) the County Council where the County is not divided into districts (*e.g.*, Caithness, Clackmannan, Selkirk), the District Committee where the County is divided into districts, and in Burghs the Town

Council. Each of these Local Authorities has one or more Medical Officers of Health and a Sanitary Inspector—(some also have Tuberculosis Officers)—and the Medical Officer of Health must possess a diploma in sanitary science, public health, or State medicine. An important fact is that no Medical Officer of Health or Sanitary Inspector can be removed from office except by or with the sanction of the Local Government Board for Scotland.

It should be noted that many of the smaller Burghs have made arrangements by which they obtain the services of the County Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector, and many District Committees have appointed the County Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector as their Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector respectively. Uniformity of administration throughout the County is thus, to a great extent, secured. In a few cases two or more Counties have combined to appoint the same Medical Officer. In addition, almost all the Local Authorities have appointed a Veterinary Surgeon for the purposes of meat inspection and the inspection of cattle in dairies. The Local Authorities receive Grants in Aid from the Exchequer for various services. Their work is more or less supervised by the Local Government Board of Scotland, which (unlike that of England) is a real Board, composed of the Secretary for Scotland, the Solicitor-General for Scotland, and the Under-Secretary for Scotland as *ex-officio* members, and three appointed members, viz., a vice-president, a legal member, and a medical member. (It is proposed now to make this into a Board of Health, and to include in it two out of the four Scottish Insurance Commissioners.)

(iii) THE FACTS

(a) *Public Health*.—No general survey of the Public Health service exists, and such a survey is badly needed. The 1,800 separate Local Health Authorities in England, and the 313 in Scotland—which are, under the Statutes, jointly responsible for preventing disease, and therefore for keeping the whole population in health—vary indefinitely in their activity. In some districts almost the only sign of a Public Health service is the payment of an annual fee of 10 or 20 guineas to a local medical practitioner to walk through the part of Medical Officer of Health, and a corresponding fee (in England and Wales) to the Poor Law Relieving Officer to pretend to be Inspector of Nuisances; and the whole Public Health expenditure of a Rural District Council responsible for the good health of tens of thousands of people may (in England) not exceed £100. At the other end of the scale stand cities like Liverpool and Manchester, where the Town Council provides elaborate drainage systems, water supply, parks and open spaces, baths and washhouses, workmen's dwellings, and municipal hospitals, whilst the Public Health Department is a highly organised and all-pervading influence, maintaining a vigilant supervision of the sanitary condition of the dwellings, the streets, the work-places, and the food supply; and carrying on a persistent campaign, not only against the ordinary notifiable zymotic

diseases, but also against infantile mortality, tuberculosis, venereal disease, measles, whooping-cough, and the minor ailments of children at school. We know that the 1,800 Local Sanitary Authorities of England and Wales, together with the County Councils, have among them from 1,800 to 2,000 Medical Officers of Health, tuberculosis officers, venereal disease officers, and medical officers of maternity and child welfare centres, and that out of these a few hundreds (including those of London, the County Councils and the County Boroughs) are salaried "full-timers," whilst the majority are private practitioners to whom the Local Health Authority pays a stipend of a few pounds per annum. Many of these latter are amongst the 16,000 or so doctors engaged in insurance domiciliary practice, or the 4,000 or 5,000 in Poor Law practice or as public vaccinators. The facts as to the hospital provision made by these Local Health Authorities are given under another section.

In Scotland also there is no survey of Public Health available. We know that the 313 Local Authorities have among them over 200 Medical Officers of Health. Of these, a considerable number devote all their time to their duties, but the majority are engaged in private practice and receive small salaries from the Local Authority.

(b) *Housing*.—The housing problem has now become so serious that the Government have been forced to introduce fresh legislation to deal with it. There is not only in practically every town and parish in the kingdom a great number of houses utterly unfit to live in or wanting repairs to make them suitable for habitation, but also a crying need for new houses—to the number, it is estimated, of something like a million. This need was apparent even before the War, and it has been enormously intensified during the last five years. It is recognised that little can be expected of private enterprise, and the task will have to be undertaken by the public authorities. But under the existing law the Local Authorities would not be likely to do much more than they have done in the past. Too many of them are composed of men whose sympathies are on the side of the landlord and the private builder, and whose aim is to protect their interests by a policy of non-interference. Even where there has been more public spirit, their activity has been discouraged by the fear of burdening the local rates with the expense of buying out private owners (this has often meant the paying of a monstrous compensation to slum owners) or of clearing sites and building. They have been handicapped, too, by the restrictions of many of the local building by-laws, and by the frequently vexatious regulations and delays of the Central Authority.

To overcome these difficulties it is proposed to make it obligatory on the local Authorities to provide good and sufficient houses, to enlarge the duty of superior authorities to act in default, to relieve the rates by large contributions from the central Exchequer, to reduce the amount of compensation which private landlords may claim, and to relax building by-laws where these interfere with progress. Public Utility Societies are also to be encouraged, by financial aid from the State, to supplement the work of the Local Authorities. And a new Housing Department of

the Ministry of Health, with 11 District Commissioners, will take the place of the old unsatisfactory department of the Local Government Board as a supervising body. Town Planning it is still proposed to leave to the discretion of the Local Authority, although in the eight years, from 1911 to 1918, only 90 Local Authorities in England and Wales asked for authority to prepare schemes, and in only 10 of these cases were schemes actually submitted for the approval of the Local Government Board. It is, however, to be made easier for those which are willing, by the abolition of the cumbersome and disheartening procedure of getting the Central Authority's sanction for a scheme.

SECTION II

THE SICK AND INFIRM AND MENTALLY DEFICIENT

THE PRESENT POSITION

PROVISION for the sick in municipal hospitals began under the Public Health Acts in the latter half of last century, but it is only in quite recent years that the medical service of the local Health Authorities has encroached seriously on the sphere of private charity and the Poor Law. As regards mental deficiency, the County Justices were empowered to establish County Lunatic Asylums in 1808. Previous to this, there was nothing for the mentally defective but a few endowed or voluntary "mad-houses," the Poorhouse, or doles of relief from the Parish Overseer. Only very gradually was any general institutional provision made, even for dangerous lunatics, and not until 1845 did it become obligatory on the Local Lunacy Authority to make the necessary provision for all persons certified as of unsound mind and unable to pay for the necessary care.

Public provision for maternity and infancy, for the health of school children and for the aged, otherwise than through the Poor Law, is of still more modern date. Early in the present century the Local Education Authorities began very grudgingly to feed elementary school children out of the rates, to organise their examination by Medical Officers, and to provide treatment in clinics and open-air schools. Later still the Local Health Authorities started to move in the direction of establishing their own Schools for Mothers, Infant Consultations and Baby Clinics, following the valuable pioneer work carried out by voluntary agencies. The aged poor were the theme of a few ardent reformers for something more than a generation before State pensions became an accomplished fact in 1907, and relieved the pressure on the Almshouse and the Workhouse.

(i) THE LAW

(a) *Infancy and Maternity.*—Under the Notification of Births Acts the Midwives' Acts, and the Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, the Local Health Authority possesses very comprehensive powers. It may (1) appoint Health Visitors for the supervision and assistance of expectant and nursing mothers and infants; (2) maintain maternity and child welfare centres for the provision of hygienic and medical advice; (3) supply food and milk; (4) provide an adequate service of trained midwives, arrange for securing the attendance of a doctor when the midwife needs his aid, and even pay the doctor's fee; (5) maintain a service of nurses for ailments of the infant or mother, and hospital accommodation for acute illness connected with pregnancy, confinement and infancy; (6) maintain maternity homes and homes for infants suffering from malnutrition, as well as convalescent homes for women after confinement

and infants, and rest homes for expectant mothers; (7) arrange for accommodation in homes or otherwise attend to the health of children of widows, deserted or unmarried mothers; (8) provide in day nurseries, crèches, etc., for children of women who go out to work; (9) supply "home helps" for taking care of the home during the mother's confinement. The Local Authorities receive Grants in Aid, to the extent of half their approved expenditure, in respect of practically all these services.

In addition there are twelve million insured persons under the National Health Insurance Acts who receive the domiciliary services of the Insurance General Practitioners (or "panel doctors") while in addition, those of them who are affected with tuberculosis are entitled to Insurance specialist services and residential treatment.

Apart from this, women insured (or whose husbands are insured) under the National Health Insurance Acts are entitled to a maternity benefit in cash at their confinement from the Local Insurance Authority, while the sick receive a weekly payment of 10/- for men and 7/6 for women. On these medical services there is spent nearly seven millions sterling annually of which some three millions comes from the Exchequer and the remainder from the contributions of employers and employees. The Local Education Authority also overlaps the Health Authority, for it is empowered to provide Nursery Schools for children over two and under five years of age, and to attend to their "health, nourishment, and physical welfare," or to aid Nursery Schools established by other bodies.

In Scotland the statutes under which the Local Authorities act are different in certain cases, but the powers are practically the same.

(b) *The School Medical Service.*—The powers in respect of the medical treatment of school children hitherto exercised by the Education Authority now pass to the Health Authority. The Local Authority is obliged to carry out a periodical medical inspection of all children in attendance at the elementary schools, and by the Education Act, 1918, also at Continuation Schools. It may, if it chooses, establish and maintain School Clinics with doctors, dentists and nurses, or otherwise provide medical attendance (but not a domiciliary medical service) to all the children requiring it, whether at elementary or continuation schools; and also at other educational institutions if so requested by the persons who manage them. Under sect. 2 (1) (b) of the Education Act, 1918, it is now to become the *duty* of the Local Authority to provide adequate and suitable treatment for the elementary school children, but this section is not yet in operation. The cost of medical treatment, at clinics or otherwise, may be recovered by the Local Authority from the parents, if it does not choose to provide free treatment out of the rates.

Grants in Aid are paid to Local Authorities to cover 50 per cent. of their expenditure.

In Scotland the Local Education Authorities have very much the same powers and duties.

(c) *The Sick.*—Under the Public Health Acts the Local Health Authorities both in England and Wales and in Scotland have long had

power to establish their own hospitals, not merely for infectious but for all diseases, and even for accidents. The Local Authority can, if it prefers, arrange for beds to be provided in voluntary hospitals or sanatoria—e.g., for the treatment of tuberculosis. It can provide dispensaries of its own, or enter into arrangements with voluntary dispensaries. It can establish and maintain colonies for ex-sanatorium patients, where an extra period of modified treatment may be given, as well as training in suitable occupations. Under the Venereal Disease Act, 1917, the Local Health Authority may provide clinics, or make other arrangements, for the treatment of venereal cases. It may pay the travelling expenses of patients who cannot afford to pay their own railway fares to treatment centres, and it may even, with the sanction of the Central Authority, provide nursing, if necessary, for the poorer inhabitants.

(d) *The Infirm Aged, etc.*—The Old Age Pensions Acts of 1907 and 1911 give the right to all British subjects of 70 years of age, who have resided in the United Kingdom for the previous 20 years, and whose annual means do not exceed £31 10s., to receive a pension, provided they are not subject to certain disqualifications, the chief of which is the receipt of Poor Law relief. The pension varies from 1s. to 5s. a week, according to the yearly income of the pensioner. As from August, 1917, and during the continuance of the war, an extra 2s. 6d. a week was allowed. Apart from this (and pensions to permanently disabled soldiers or sailors), there is no real provision made by the community for the aged and permanently crippled or incapacitated, except under the Poor Law, which offers the workhouse or outdoor relief, and, occasionally, "Cottage" or "Parochial" Homes for aged paupers.

(e) *Mental Deficiency.*—The Lunacy Act of 1890, which applies only to England and Wales as amended by the Lunacy Act of 1891, made it the duty of the Local Lunacy Authority, acting through the Visiting Committee (of its own members), which that Authority must appoint, and either alone or by arrangement with some other Lunacy Authority, to provide and maintain asylum accommodation for all the persons of unsound mind belonging to its area who, by reason of being unable, by themselves or their legally liable relatives, to provide for their full maintenance and necessary care, were wholly or partly chargeable to public funds, whether or not chargeable as paupers to any Poor Law Authority. These are termed pauper lunatics.

The Mental Deficiency Act, 1913, while not superseding the Lunacy Acts, has considerably enlarged the powers of the Local Authority. Its provisions deal specifically with idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons and moral imbeciles, and each Local Authority is required to ascertain what persons within its area are defective and to provide suitable supervision for them, or, should supervision not afford proper protection, to send them to institutions or arrange for their guardianship.

With regard to children between 7 and 16, who, without being certified as of unsound mind, are found to be mentally defective, Local Education Authorities are required by the Elementary Education (Defective

and Epileptic Children) Act, 1914, to establish and maintain special schools for such children, and to enforce attendance up to 16.

The law in Scotland is essentially similar to that of England and Wales.

(ii) THE AUTHORITIES

The constitution of the Local Health Authorities which deal with maternity and infancy, and with sickness generally, and which, under the new unified National Health service, will presently deal with all the classes in this Section, is explained in the Prefatory Statement to the Public Health and Housing Section. In addition there are the Insurance Committees constituted under the National Health Insurance Acts, and representing the members of Approved Societies, the Local Authorities, the Medical Practitioners, and the Insurance Commissioners.

The children of school age requiring medical treatment, the mentally defective and the aged, have hitherto been provided for by other Local Authorities. (1) The children were under the Education Committee of the County or County Borough or Town or Urban District Council, and in Scotland the "Local Education Authority" (these are referred to more fully in the Prefatory Statement to the Education Section). (2) Under the Lunacy Acts the Local Authority is, in England and Wales, the County Council or County Borough Council, acting through its Visiting or Asylums Committee (appointed annually by the Council exclusively from its own members). In Lancashire all the County Boroughs have united with the County Council to form a single Lunacy Authority for the geographical County, under a federal "Lancashire Lunacy Board." Under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913, a Committee for the Care of the Mentally Defective is appointed by every County or County Borough Council, consisting of (i) members of the Council itself, and (ii) co-opted members, Poor Law Guardians, or other persons having special knowledge or experience with respect to the care, control and treatment of defectives. Some of these latter must be women, and of the whole Committee the majority must be members of the Council. And this Committee may be authorised to be the Visiting or Asylums Committee under the Lunacy Acts.

In Scotland the Local Lunacy Authorities are *ad hoc* authorities, the 28 District Boards of Control.

The Local Administrative body with regard to epileptic and mentally defective children between 7 and 16, not being certified as of unsound mind, is the Local Education Authority for the purposes of Part III. of the Education Act, 1902—that is to say, in rural and small urban districts, the County Council; in urban districts over 20,000, and in non-county boroughs over 10,000 (except in a few, which have ceded their powers to the County Council), the District or Borough Council; and in County Boroughs the County Borough Council. (This, of course, applies to England and Wales; in Scotland the Local Education Authority is an independent body elected for the County and for certain of the largest Burghs.)

(3) The Authority for administering Old Age Pensions is the Local Pensions Committee, appointed by the Council of every County, Borough (or Burgh in Scotland), or Urban District with a population of 20,000, holding office for three years (or less, if so decided by the Council) and the members not being necessarily members of the Council.

(iii) THE FACTS

(a) *Maternity and Infancy*.—The Local Health Authorities during the last four years have devoted increasing attention to the care of mothers and children. Health Visitors have been appointed in most parts of the country, though the sufficiency of the staff varies considerably in different districts. On July 1st, 1918, the total number of Health Visitors and trained and salaried workers of voluntary societies engaged in Maternity and Child Welfare in England and Wales was 2,897. Of these 762 were whole-time officers of Local Authorities, 755 were officers of Local Authorities holding one or more of the following posts:—(1) school nurse, (2) tuberculosis visitor, (3) sanitary inspector, and 1,044 were District Nurses also acting as Health Visitors.

The number of "Centres" for mothers and infants increased between March, 1917, and July, 1918, from 842 to 1,278. Of these 700 were municipal and 578 voluntary. Many of the Voluntary Centres, it should be noted, receive financial assistance from the Local Authority. The Local Government Board reported last year that the Centres "vary greatly in the scope of their work. Some are open every day, have a special staff of trained superintendents and nurses, and comprise medical consultations at several sessions weekly for expectant and nursing mothers, and infants and children up to five; classes in sewing, cooking, hygiene and mothercraft, and dental and ophthalmic clinics and other provisions for treatment, and in a few cases observation cots for ailing babies. Other Centres provide for nothing more than weekly, fortnightly or monthly baby-weighings, and are conducted by the Health Visitor and a body of unpaid and untrained workers, with no medical supervision and no treatment." Dental assistance has been largely extended at Centres for expectant and nursing mothers, and for children, especially in and near London. Grants in Aid are now given to cover dentures for mothers who are nursing or pregnant, if the Medical Officer of the Centre is satisfied that the woman's health will be materially improved by the denture, and that she is unable to pay for it herself.

A good many Local Authorities have taken steps to secure a better service of midwifery. Bradford in 1918 had seven municipal midwives, Newcastle three, whilst some County Councils (*e.g.*, Monmouthshire) employ midwives directly for parts of the county. In rural districts the midwifery service, which is generally provided by Nursing Associations, has been extended by means of contributions from County Councils and grants from the Local Government Board. The midwives employed by these Nursing Associations often undertake maternity nursing in the more scattered districts, but in the towns, generally speaking, the quality of maternity nursing is less satisfactory. Complaints are also made that the work of inspection of midwives is not properly done.

A few Local Authorities (*e.g.*, Bradford and Willesden) have special hospitals or wards for maternity cases; others subsidise voluntary hospitals. But the majority of Local Authorities have not yet appreciated the great need for institutional treatment for complicated midwifery cases, as well as for a certain number of normal cases. Practically nothing has been done, either, in the provision of convalescent homes for women after their confinement. An increasing number of Local Authorities are now supplying nurses at the patient's home for cases of measles, whooping cough, ophthalmia neonatorum and acute diarrhoea in children under five, and also for women after confinement and for puerperal fever cases. Crèches and Day Nurseries have been encouraged by the Central Authority, and during the war the Ministry of Munitions, as well as the Local Government Board, was empowered to aid them with grants.

(b) *The School Medical Service.*—The Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, in his last Annual Report (1918), claims that the School Medical Service is “now a national system . . . as complete of its kind and more universal than elsewhere in the world—at work in all the 318 educational areas of England and Wales, in all the 21,000 Public Elementary Schools, and in many of the Secondary, Preparatory, and Public Schools.” It is not, however, really complete and adequate, he admits. In medical inspection and diagnosis “we are lamentably behind in respect of satisfactory standards, both physical and mental; hitherto insufficient attention has been devoted by School Medical Officers to the study of disease in the child; medical treatment is thus far partial in scope and prevention and inadequate in degree; and we are still, in most educational areas, lacking such elementary auxiliaries as school baths, open-air schools and adequate physical training.”

In 1915 (before the temporary shortage due to the war) there were, in England and Wales, 855 School Medical Officers engaged in inspection and treatment, and 445 employed in special work (ophthalmic, aural, dental, etc.), and 1,500 school nurses, employed in 291 out of the 317 educational areas. By 1917, 151 Local Educational Authorities had established a dental service, employing 200 school dentists at work in 300 school dental clinics. The growth of school clinics for general medical and surgical treatment has been remarkable. In 1908 only seven Local Education Authorities had clinics of their own. Nine years later there were 512 clinics provided by 231 Local Educational Authorities. It is estimated that about 60 per cent. of all the children found to be defective on medical inspection are now receiving treatment. As regards abnormal children, there were in 1917, in England and Wales, 413 Special Schools for the blind, deaf, physically and mentally defective, epileptic and tuberculous, accommodating 31,470 children. This provision is, however, not yet adequate. It is estimated, for instance, that further accommodation is required for not less than 25,000 physically, and 15,000 mentally defective children.

(c) *The Sick.*—Prior to the war, the number of hospital beds provided by Public Health Authorities in England and Wales was 311,000, of

which 39,000 were for fever and smallpox, 10,000 for tuberculosis, 109,000 for insane in asylums, and 12,000 for the feeble-minded. There were also at least 94,000 beds provided by the Poor Law Authorities, and at least 45,000 provided in Voluntary Hospitals. A considerable number of beds in Voluntary Hospitals are allocated, at the expense of the Local Health Authorities, for tuberculous and venereal cases and for lying-in women and infants. But in many parts of the country there are no hospitals at all, and there is obviously room for a large extension of municipal hospitals, and, as the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board has recently pointed out, for the systematisation of the provision of institutions for the sick supported by public funds. As regards home nursing, the Central Authority administers Grants in Aid to the extent of one-half of approved local expenditure on health visitors, nurses for tuberculosis, midwives and maternity nurses, and nurses for various diseases of children. This list could be extended if the Local Health Authorities chose, for they have only to obtain the formal sanction of the Central Authority to provide home nursing for any form of sickness in the poorer inhabitants of their districts.

Considerable progress has recently been made in the treatment of tuberculosis and of venereal disease. By April, 1918, 143 tuberculosis institutions, containing 6,381 beds, and 341 dispensaries, had been provided by Local Health Authorities in England and Wales. Convalescent Colonies for ex-sanatorium patients have been established by a few Local Authorities—*e.g.*, the Leicester Town Council has a colony where employment is given in a market garden. The total provision, however, for consumptives, whether by public authorities or voluntary effort, falls very far short, it is clear, of what is needed.

As regards venereal disease, by the beginning of last year 127 Local Health Authorities had had schemes approved by the Local Government Board for the provision of free diagnosis and treatment, and 121 Treatment Centres (serving a population of something like 30,000,000) were in operation. The majority of these Centres have been established at general hospitals, though occasionally they have been provided by the Local Authority apart from a hospital. Here, again, however, much additional accommodation is required. The Local Government Board recently called special attention to the want of beds for lying-in women or expectant mothers suffering from gonorrhœa.

(d) *The Infirm Aged, etc.*—The number of old-age pensioners in Great Britain last year was 767,895. At the end of 1917 there were in England and Wales 46,753 paupers over 70 years of age in the workhouses, or other Poor Law institutions, or receiving outdoor relief, and in Scotland there were 4,546. A considerable number of these were actually old-age pensioners (8,161 in England and Wales), but receiving only medical relief, which does not disqualify for a pension. Of the total of 46,753 in England and Wales, 7,624 were receiving outdoor relief and 39,129 were in institutions (*i.e.*, workhouses, Poor Law infirmaries, Poor Law Homes). In Scotland, about 60 per cent. of the total were "outdoor" and 40 per cent. "indoor." The Scottish Local Government Board also

makes another return of "Sane Poor 65 years of age and upwards," and from this it appears that there are very nearly as many between 65 and 70 as over 70. It is clear, therefore, that the provision for the infirm aged, even if we include under the term only those of 65 years of age, will be an important task for the Health Authorities, when they take it over from the Poor Law. Only a comparatively small number of decent institutions, such as the "Homes," etc., which were referred to favourably by the Poor Law Commission, have been established by the Boards of Guardians and Scottish Parish Councils.

(e) *Mental Deficiency*.—At the beginning of 1918 the number of notified insane persons under care in England and Wales (*i.e.*, under the Lunacy Acts) was 125,841. Of these the vast majority were pauper patients, mostly maintained in County and Borough Asylums or in the workhouses (90,751 in the County and Borough Asylums, 11,843 in ordinary workhouses, and 6,476 in the Metropolitan District Asylums). A "pauper" patient, it should be observed, is one whose maintenance is defrayed, either wholly or in part, out of the rates. Many so classed are not really paupers in the ordinary sense; for they are actually maintained by relations, who pay back to the Poor Law Guardians the whole cost. Broadly speaking, therefore, it may be said that adequate public provision exists for the certified lunatics. But it is otherwise with the other mentally defective persons (to the number of 150,000 or so, according to the estimate of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded a few years ago) who come under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913. Of these—comprising idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons, etc.—a very large number need institutional treatment. But in 1918 there were only 7,941 "mentally defective patients" registered by the Board of Control. The main reason for this, it is stated, was the war, which curtailed the expenditure of the Authorities as well as the accommodation available, and compelled them to confine the application of the Act to "urgent" cases, where it was evident that immediate control was essential to the welfare of the individual or of the community. On the other hand, a good deal has been done during the last five years in ascertaining the numbers who require care, in preparing schemes for their education, training and industrial employment, and so on.

One hundred and twenty-two Local Authorities received Grants in Aid during 1917-18. The Central Authority (the Board of Control) in their last Annual Report complain that "there is still a marked difference between the energy and thoroughness with which some Local Authorities are undertaking their duties and the comparative inactivity of others."

A good deal of valuable work is done by various Voluntary Societies in assisting the Local Authorities in the work of ascertainment, visiting and supervising of defectives, finding suitable care for cases placed under guardianship, conveying defectives to institutions, and establishing work centres. There are also a few endowed or voluntary institutions receiving idiots, feeble-minded women, and inebriates, which are certified and receive grants from the Central Authority.

SECTION III

EDUCATION

(BOARDING AND NURSERY SCHOOLS, ETC.)

THE PRESENT POSITION

THE first "education authority" in England was the Parish Overseer, who, under the Elizabethan Poor Law, had to set to work and apprentice all children whose parents could not maintain them. The Poor Law Authority remained the only Local Education Authority down to 1870, when School Boards were established. The School Board, however, was for a long time commonly understood to be concerned only with the mind of the child, and it was not until the beginning of this century that the Education Authority proper became a serious rival to the Poor Law.

(i) THE LAW

The Law permits, and the Local Government Board has long encouraged, the Boards of Guardians to provide for pauper children in homes or institutions separate from the workhouse. This provision may take the form of (a) boarding-out (only for orphan, deserted or "adopted" children); (b) Scattered Homes; (c) Poor Law Schools and Cottage Homes. Of boarding-out (*i.e.*, placing the child in the house of a private person or family) there are two varieties—boarding-out "within the Union" and boarding-out "beyond the Union." In both cases the Guardians must appoint a Boarding-Out Committee to supervise the welfare of the children. In the Scattered Homes system small groups of children live under a foster-mother in houses maintained by the Poor Law Authority and attend the ordinary Elementary Schools. The Poor Law School, of the old type, the "barrack" boarding-school maintained by a single Union, or the "district school," run by a combination of Unions, has now generally given place to the modern system of Cottage Homes. These are separate villas, in which the children reside under the charge of matrons or "mothers," each villa containing, as a rule, 20 or 30 children, and the whole forming one institution, a "Village Community," having its own school in the grounds.

The Local Education Authority also has power to establish and maintain residential boarding-schools, vacation schools and open-air schools, and it may provide completely for abnormal children, the mentally defective, epileptics, blind, deaf, crippled, criminal, tuberculous, etc. And now, by the Education Act, 1918, the Local Education Authority is empowered to supply or aid Nursery Schools or Classes for children over two and under five years of age ("or such later age as may be approved by the Board of Education") whose attendance is necessary or desirable for their healthy physical and mental development. The Local Health Authority had already been given power, with the sanction of the Local

Government Board (now the Ministry of Health), to provide nurseries for children "who have not attained the age of five years and are not being educated in schools recognised by the Board of Education."

(ii) THE AUTHORITIES

Of the constitution of the Local Destitution Authority, the Board of Guardians (in Scotland the Parish Council), it is unnecessary to say anything here, whilst the Health Authorities have been referred to elsewhere (see Prefatory Statement to Public Health and Housing Section). The Local Education Authority in England and Wales is everywhere a Council directly elected by the ratepayers (including women) either annually by thirds or triennially *en bloc*. It is generally the same Council that administers the other Local Government services (with the single exception of the Poor Law). Thus in London and other Counties it is the County Council; and in the County Boroughs, it is the County Borough Councils. But in the smaller towns the duty is divided. In Non-County Boroughs exceeding in 1901 10,000 in population, and in Urban Districts other than Boroughs exceeding in 1901 20,000 in population, the Town or Urban District Council is the Local Authority for Part III. of the Act of 1902 (Administration of Elementary Education), and may expend up to a penny rate on education other than elementary, whilst the County Council is responsible for everything else. Such Town or Urban District Councils may, however, cede their responsibility to the County Council, and a few of them have done so, leaving altogether only 318 Local Education Authorities for all the 37,000,000 population of England and Wales. It should be added that the Council is in all cases required to appoint an Education Committee which may include a minority of co-opted members and must contain some persons of educational experience and at least one woman. The Council must consult this Committee, and may devolve upon it as much as it likes of the work, except the raising of a rate or the borrowing of money. Everywhere there must be voluntary "managers" for each non-provided school; and, in Administrative Counties, for each provided school. In London and elsewhere similar voluntary machinery is made use of also for every evening continuation school, secondary school, and training college.

In Scotland, the Local Authority is now an independent *ad hoc* body, elected for each County and for each of five Burghs—Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Leith. This body, called the "Local Education Authority," by the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, supersedes the School Board, and it will carry on its work largely through Committees appointed "for the management of schools or groups of schools under their control throughout their education area." The Education Authority, however, may not delegate to the School Management Committee the raising of money by rates or otherwise, or the acquisition or holding of land, or the appointment, transfer, remuneration or dismissal of teachers, or certain powers and duties in connection with intermediate, secondary and technical schools. The School Management

Committee must include representatives not only of the Education Authority, but of the parents, of the teachers, and, in certain cases, of the religious denomination of the parents. And in the case of the Counties, there must be local representation also, through the nomination of Town and Parish Councils or otherwise, on each School Management Committee.

(iii) THE FACTS

The Poor Law Commission found the conditions of boarding-out by the Destitution Authorities urgently in need of reform, although, in some ways this appeared to be the best of the methods of dealing with the children. Boarding-out beyond the Union was far more satisfactory than boarding-out within the Union, but there was a considerable improvement in the latter after the Guardians had been compelled by a Local Government Board Order in 1911 to appoint a Boarding-Out Committee for these cases as well as for the other. In criticism of the whole system, the Minority Commissioners reported that it is "a system which, under careful and continuous supervision, and confined to a minority of suitable cases, has much to recommend it, but it is at present seriously prejudiced by the fact that the Destitution Authorities and their officers are, by the very nature of their functions, unqualified to maintain an efficient inspection of the homes and institutions which they select for their children, let alone any continuous supervision of their welfare." In 1917-18 there were 10,570 children boarded out in England and Wales, and in Scotland 7,521, of whom 3,426 were orphans or deserted children, and 4,095 children separated from their parents. (Of these 1,804, or 23.99 per cent. were placed with relatives, and 5,717, or 76.01 per cent., were under the care of strangers, among these latter being included cases in Orphanages, Industrial Schools or institutions other than Poorhouses.)

As regards institutional treatment, there were, at the beginning of 1918, 30,925 children in England and Wales in "separate institutions provided by Poor Law Authorities wholly for the reception and maintenance of children"—i.e., broadly speaking, the Poor Law Schools and Cottage Homes. These Cottage Homes, it is undeniable, are often well built and well-managed institutions; indeed, a good deal of criticism was directed at them by the Poor Law Commission on the ground of their elaborateness and expense. The Minority Report also criticised them for other reasons—the stigma of pauperism resting on them, the indiscriminate mixture of children of different grades of intelligence, the difficulty of getting good teachers, the interference with education caused by the constant passage of the "in and out" children. Those objections are, of course, removed by their transference to the Education Authority, which will presently find itself in possession of a number of excellent boarding schools.

But there is also an enormous host of children on outdoor relief (at the beginning of 1918 there were 124,372 in England and Wales, and a good many thousands in Scotland). A large proportion of these are the children of widows unable to maintain themselves and their families

without resorting to the Poor Law. Proposals have been put forward, notably by the Labour Party, that these widows, or mothers whose family bread-winner is incapacitated, should receive "Mothers' Pensions," provided by the State and administered by the Local Authority, to enable them to support their homes in decency, while their children attend the Elementary Schools. This system is in vogue in America, where 35 out of 48 of the United States have adopted it, but nothing of the kind has hitherto been attempted in this country. The Government has, however, expressed sympathy with the principle.

Nursing Schools, on the other hand, have advanced a stage further; for the Local Education Authority, as indicated above, will now be able to found and develop its own. It may be noted that there are already in existence a number of Day Nurseries, mostly maintained by voluntary effort, but occasionally by the Local Health Authority, and practically all of them take children over three years of age. The Board of Education in the year 1917-18, recognised and gave grants to 137 of these Day Nurseries, though it has not been fully satisfied with the way in which many of them have been maintained.

SECTION IV

UNEMPLOYMENT

THE PRESENT POSITION

IT will be convenient to keep clearly in view the twofold aspect of the problem, viz., first, the "relief of the unemployed," and secondly, the prevention of unemployment. We have to consider on the one hand the provision to be made for those who have been thrown out of employment, and on the other the steps to be taken to prevent men from becoming "unemployed" by any discontinuity which can be obviated.

With the first question, the provision for what is, in one aspect, the "reserve army" of industry, voluntary philanthropy has busied itself in England for at least 250 years; but any recognition of State responsibility in the matter (apart from the general provisions of the Poor Law) seems to have been, prior to the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, only spasmodic and episodic. The large Grant from the Exchequer in 1799-1800 for distribution among the Bethnal Green Silk Weavers, and the extensive relief works out of Government loans in the Lancashire cotton famine in 1862-5 afford the best known examples.

With regard to the prevention of unemployment—that is to say, the promotion of continuity of employment—little has yet been done beyond inserting clauses in recent Acts of Parliament referred to below.

(i) THE LAW

The statutory provisions with regard to Unemployment are scanty. By the Merchant Shipping Acts provision is made for the establishment of Mercantile Marine Offices; and it is an offence for any engagement of a seaman, fireman, etc., to be concluded anywhere but at one of such public offices.

The Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, for the first time empowered Local Authorities, otherwise than under the general provisions of the Poor Law, to relieve unemployed workmen in distress (i) by paying the cost of their migration or emigration; (ii) by maintaining them in farm colonies; (iii) by instituting relief works; and (iv) by setting up a universal system of Labour Exchanges. The last-named provision (though it was mandatory in its terms) was not carried into effect. The payment of wages on relief works cannot be made from the rates, and as voluntary contributions were from the first hopelessly inadequate, and soon fell away to nothing, the provision of relief works has come to depend almost entirely on the Grants doled out for this purpose from the Exchequer, every proposed work having therefore to receive the specific approval of the Local Government Board.

The Labour Exchanges Act of 1909 provided for the establishment of Labour Exchanges throughout the United Kingdom under the Board of Trade (now the Ministry of Labour).

The National Insurance Act, 1911, deals, generally speaking, with unemployment in a remedial rather than a preventive way, by the payment of benefits to persons out of work in certain trades. It does, however, contain a provision which gives power to the Exchanges to establish schemes for decasualisation, and attempts in this direction have been made here and there, notably at the Liverpool Docks. The Port of London Authority Act, 1908, had, it may be noted, actually required the Port Authority to take steps to prevent the evils of "under-employment," but very little was done to carry out this obligation.

Some effort was also made in the years immediately preceding the War to deal through the Labour Exchanges with the misuse of juvenile labour, which has long been recognised as a direct or indirect cause of unemployment. The Education (Choice of Employment) Act, 1910, and in Scotland the Education (Scotland) Act, 1908, gave the Local Education Authorities power to assist boys and girls under 17 years of age (this is now altered to 18 by the Education Act, 1918), by the collection and communication of information and the furnishing of advice as to suitable employment. The Local Education Authority and the Employment Exchange have, in many places, co-operated in this work through Advisory Committees. But no really substantial progress can be recorded. More general in its scope is the provision in the Development and Roads Improvement Funds Act of 1910, which definitely requires that in sanctioning or proceeding with schemes of work under that Act, regard shall be had to the state of the labour market.

(ii) THE AUTHORITIES

The Authorities for providing for men actually out of employment are, under the Acts above stated, (a) with regard to enabling such men to find new situations, the Board of Trade in its Mercantile Marine Offices and the Ministry of Labour in its Employment Exchanges Department; (b) with regard to sanctioning schemes of relief works to be aided by Exchequer Grants, the Local Government Board; (c) with regard to migration or emigration, training in a Farm Colony, or employment on relief works, the Distress Committee (in London, also the "Central Body") constituted by the Town or County Council to carry out the Act, and composed partly of Councillors, partly of Poor Law Guardians, and partly of persons of philanthropic experience; (d) with regard to insurance, the Ministry of Labour and the Employment Exchanges.

With regard to preventing unemployment—that is, promoting continuity of employment—the Authorities are (a) the Development Commissioners, the Road Board and the Treasury under the Development and Roads Improvement Funds Act, 1910, and (b) the Ministry of Labour in its Employment Exchanges Department, under the Labour Exchanges Act, 1909. With the exception of the Port of London Authority, which (as above mentioned) has a statutory obligation to try to "decasualise," no Local Authority appears to have been specifically recognised as having any responsibility for regularising the aggregate demand for labour. But by successive Circulars the Local Government Board has,

for some years, pressed on all Local Authorities the desirability of doing their building, road-making, and other work, as far as possible, in the winter slackness.

(iii) THE FACTS

It will be convenient here to give a brief summary of the facts previous to the War, before stating the position, as far as we can ascertain it, to-day. As regards the period of the war itself, little need be said. In the early autumn of 1914, owing to the enormous dislocation of industry, unemployment was severe and widespread. Various remedies were applied (notably the working of short time), and, as things settled down, there was a steady improvement. Later, as more and more men joined the Army, and women took their places, or were required for the making of munitions, the available jobs actually outnumbered the applicants for them. And until the beginning of this year the unemployment problem had ceased to exist.

In 1913-14, from such statistics as were to hand, it appeared (i) that there were always trades in want of more skilled workers than were at the moment available anywhere in the kingdom—*e.g.*, shipbuilding riveters; (ii) that there were a number of occupations which habitually failed to provide a full week's work for those engaged in them, these unfortunate persons obtaining, on an average of the whole occupation, only from 3.3 to 16.8 days' work in the month; (iii) that whilst some vacant situations could not be filled, owing to an actual lack of qualified candidates, there was also at all times and seasons a large number of persons for whom no situations could be found; (iv) that some thousands of persons per month were, by the Employment Exchanges, placed in situations in districts other than those in which they had been residing; but that this left everywhere a surplus for whom no situations could be found anywhere in the kingdom; (v) that the employed for whom situations could not be found were of all ages (about half being under 40 and many being mere boys) and of nearly all occupations, more than half of them being usually unskilled labourers in the various trades, and about one-sixth of them belonging to one or other branch of the building trade; and (vi) that both these conditions were (to a greater or less extent) chronic and general, in good years as well as in bad, at all seasons and at every Labour Exchange.

The continuity of employment (and, therefore, the rarity of cases in which men were involuntarily thrown out of employment) varied enormously from occupation to occupation; the percentage of dismissals or resignations from any given staff in the course of a year being very small in the municipal and railway services, agriculture, coal mining, and many factory industries (though some of these had "fringes" of casual labour, and some made seasonal demands for extra hands); whilst it was very great in all casual labour, in constructional engineering works and in the building trades in large towns, and great in the shipbuilding and some branches of the engineering trades. In all branches of casual labour the discontinuity was enormous, as was shown by the official figures of vacancies filled by the Exchanges in certain specified

casual occupations. In 1911 these amounted to 125,304, and the mean number of applicants in each month given casual employment was 2,080. But a large percentage of the vacancies for adults on the ordinary register were of less than one week's duration, and allowance must, therefore, be made for a great many "catch jobs." Nor, obviously, could any reliable estimate be framed of the extent and amount of under-employment without the registers and returns being extended to cover all trades employing casual labour. In the four weeks ending Dec. 12th, 1913, the number of men given casual employment through the Exchanges was 2,421, and the number of casual jobs given was 11,377 (of which 6,135 were for dock labourers, 4,941 for cloth porters at Manchester, and 301 for cotton porters at Liverpool). In the five weeks ending July 13th, 1914, the Exchanges provided casual employment for 2,401 men, and the number of jobs given amounted to 20,403.

The occupations, or the kind of situations for which on the occurrence of vacancies enough hands could not be found, varied from district to district from year to year and from season to season, but they were hardly ever entirely wanting. They fell into two main groups:—

1. Vacancies in new or growing industries demanding skilled men for permanent work. There had, for instance, long been an unsatisfied demand for coach-body painters and for women textile workers.

2. Vacancies in seasonal trades which required, for short periods, much larger numbers of certain workers than could be obtained at the season in which they were needed. Thus, skilled women workers in the clothing trades were always being sought for at each busy season.

The number of applicants for whom jobs could not be found differed considerably in different districts and in different years, but showed *in the aggregate*, much less fluctuation as between different months of the year. The applicants of this kind remaining on the books of the Exchange were everywhere almost always of the same types, except for the greater or less prevalence of the "Under-employed" casual labourer, according to the relative part played by dock, wharf, riverside or market employment.

As to the numerical extent of the shifting mass of workers during any one year, the number out of situations at any one time, the length of time that either individuals or the average case remained out of work, and the aggregate fluctuations, month by month, or year by year, of this constant "reserve army" of industry, there was hardly material for a guess. We know that among the aggregate membership of the Trade Unions giving out-of-work benefits, there were, in the best years, 98 per cent. in employment, and in the worst years, 89 per cent. But for various reasons very little useful deduction as to the whole body of wage-earners can be made from these figures. Returns under the Insurance Act showed that, at the beginning of 1913, when trade was on the whole exceptionally brisk, there were, out of about two and a quarter million workmen in the

specified insured trades, more than 100,000 signing the Employment Exchanges' books as unemployed. These statistics, however, fail to carry us very much further. They are obviously limited in their scope, excluding, as they do, the textile, clothing, food and tobacco, transport, and other large and important industries, most women and girl workers, the greater part of the under-employed casual labourers, all seamen and practically all agricultural labourers, besides a host of vagrants (variously estimated at between 30,000 and 80,000), and some thousands of able-bodied men in health in the workhouses.

As for the present situation, the circumstances are so abnormal that we can only draw inferences with the greatest caution. Under the Government scheme for paying out-of-work donation to persons unemployed as a consequence of the change from war to peace conditions, there were, at the beginning of March, no less than 948,620 names on the books of the Employment Exchanges. Of these 782,363 were civilians (more than two-thirds of them being women and girls), and 166,257 were demobilised members of the Forces. Down to March 21st, a total sum of £12,000,000 had been paid out. Other indications are to be found in the Trade Union and Insurance Acts statistics. Of a total of 1,167,757 Trade Unionists—(this figure excludes those serving with the Forces)—2.8 per cent were unemployed at the beginning of March, as compared with 0.9 per cent. twelve months earlier. At the same date, of the three and a-half millions of men and women insured against unemployment under the Insurance Acts, the percentage unemployed was 10.71 per cent., as against 0.89 a year before. These percentages, of course, will tend to come down. Already by the beginning of April, it was reported that a very large number of the women were disappearing from the registers—partly as a result of the pressure put on them to enter, or re-enter, domestic service. Many women, too, it must be remembered, were only temporarily in industry, and would naturally return to their homes on the demobilisation of the men whose places they had taken during the War. Nevertheless, despite official optimism, trade and industry have not re-adjusted themselves with anything like the rapidity which was hoped for. In some cases there has been a steady decline of employment since the beginning of this year; the position in the cotton-spinning and building trades, for instance, is serious. Moreover, there are new problems, such as the insistence by certain firms on keeping on the women whom they substituted for men during the War. There appears to be no ground for expecting any diminution of the casual labour evil, nor, indeed, it is to be feared, for anticipating anything better than the re-emergence of the whole problem of unemployment as it was five years ago.

SECTION V

CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS

(1) *The Areas and Method of Election of Councillors.*—Thirty-five years ago Local Government in this country was not inaptly described as “consisting of a chaos of areas, a chaos of authorities, and a chaos of rates.” There were, at that time, in England and Wales 52 counties, 239 municipal boroughs, 70 Improvement Act Districts, 1,006 Urban Sanitary Districts, 41 Port Sanitary Authorities, and 577 Rural Sanitary Districts; 2,051 School Board Districts, 424 Highway Districts, 835 Burial Board Districts, 649 Unions, 194 Lighting and Watching Districts, 14,946 Poor Law parishes, 5,064 Highway parishes not included in Urban or Highway Districts, and about 13,000 ecclesiastical parishes. The ratepayer was taxed by means of 18 different sorts of rates, imposed by a total of 27,069 local authorities. Since that time there has been a great simplification, notably as a result of the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, and the London Government Act, 1899.

At the present day England and Wales, outside London, is divided for Local administration into 80 County Boroughs, 61 Administrative Counties, 247 Boroughs, 804 Urban Districts, and 661 Rural Districts. London has one County Council, 28 Borough Councils, and a City Council. All these are rating authorities. In addition there is a large number of minor authorities (with a very limited power of raising money), in the shape of Parish Councils, besides the Local Poor Law Authorities, which in the rural areas are coincident with the Rural District Councils, and which are now on the eve of abolition. There are also some special authorities, Dock and Harbour Boards, Water Boards, and so on. In Scotland the authorities are County Councils, Burgh Councils (Royal Burghs and Police Burghs), Parish Councils, which administer the Poor Law, and are not to be confused with the English Parish Councils, *ad hoc* Local Education Authorities, and District Boards of Control for mental deficiency and lunacy. Most of the Counties are, for public health purposes, divided up into Districts, varying in number from two (as in Renfrewshire) to eight (as in Invernessshire) and administered by District Committees, subordinate and indirectly elected bodies. Eight Counties are undivided, the County Council itself administering the whole area.

The Councils of all these administrative bodies are popularly elected bodies, which differ but slightly in their general constitutional arrangements. In the Counties (including London) the Councillors are elected by the local government electors for a period of three years. A small number of Aldermen are chosen by the Council itself, either from the existing councillors or from outside. These Aldermen sit for six years, half their number retiring every third year. In the Boroughs (whether County or non-County) the Councillors are also elected by the local government electors and sit for three years. But the whole Council does not go out together. One-third retires every year, and elections are,

therefore, held annually (on November 1). The rule as to Aldermen is identical with that in the Counties.

The Urban and Rural District Councillors sit for three years, and one-third go out of office by rotation each year (in April). But in many districts by special order the whole body retires *en bloc* every third year. There are no Aldermen; every member is directly elected.

In London the 28 Metropolitan Borough Councils are on practically the same footing as ordinary Municipal Boroughs, except that the whole number of Councillors retires together every third year. The City of London is in a peculiar position of independence. Its Corporation exercises its functions through three bodies, the Court of Aldermen, the Court of Common Council, and the Court of Common Hall. The Aldermen are elected by the wards into which the City is divided, and they hold office for life. The Common Councilmen are elected annually in different proportions by the several wards. The electors at the ward-mote elections need not be citizens, but they must have certain property qualifications in the City. The Court of Common Hall is an oligarchical body, consisting of the Mayor, Sheriffs, Aldermen and all the liverymen of the great City Companies, and meeting only twice a year. It elects the Sheriffs, the Chamberlain and other officers, and it nominates two Aldermen for the office of Lord Mayor.

The Parish is not of any practical administrative importance now in the towns. But the Local Government Act of 1894 put the rural civil parish in a different position. Every rural parish has a Parish Meeting, which is the assembly of the local government electors in the parish, meeting at least once a year. But in every rural parish with 300 or more inhabitants there must also be a Parish Council. Where the number of inhabitants is between 100 and 300 the County Council must establish a Parish Council if the Parish Meeting so desires, and where the population is less than 100 the County Council may establish one, if it chooses, with the consent of the Parish Meeting.

Parish Councillors are elected for three years—usually at the annual assembly of the Parish Meeting. Voting is by show of hands, but the Chairman or any five electors (or one-third of those present) can cause a poll to be taken by ballot.

The Guardians are, like the other Local Authorities, elected for three years. The Board of Guardians has power to co-opt a Chairman, a Deputy-Chairman, and not more than two members from outside. Its area is the Poor Law Union, which is a parish or a union of parishes.

As regards the method of election, it will be seen that it is practically uniform throughout the country. Voting is by ballot (except in the rare cases where Parish Councillors are elected by show of hands), and each elector may vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled in his particular registration unit (*e.g.*, ward, parish, etc.). In Scotland, however, the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, has introduced the system of proportional representation for the Local Education Authorities, each elector having one transferable vote—*i.e.*, “a vote (*a*) capable of being given so as to indicate the voter’s preference for the candidates in order;

and (b) capable of being transferred to the next choice when the vote is not required to give a prior choice the necessary quota of votes, or when, owing to the deficiency in the number of the votes given for a prior choice, that choice is eliminated from the list of candidates." This is, so far as local government is concerned, the sole variation from the normal system in the United Kingdom.

With regard to the areas, however, there is a great deal of confusion, overlapping and inequality. Many of the existing units of administration are very small, with awkward consequences in various important services, such as transport, housing or finance. Inequalities of Local Government rating areas are flagrant. The existence of sharp divisions—*e.g.*, between neighbouring boroughs of the well-to-do and the poor, such as Hove and Brighton, Newcastle and Gateshead—produces obviously unhappy results. Moreover, these adjacent areas are not merely unequal in their financial resources and burdens; they are often in practical opposition in matters of policy. The clash of interests of certain of the County Councils and County Borough Councils, or the mutual jealousies of neighbouring Authorities, have again and again impeded proper development in transport and communications, in lighting and power, in housing and in other public services. In the sphere of Public Health, the multiplicity of Local Authorities has for long impaired the efficiency of administration, especially in the case of the Counties, where the powers are shared among the County Council, the Urban District Councils, the Rural District Councils, and the Boards of Guardians. All these bodies have their own Medical Officers of Health (though sometimes the same practitioner serves two authorities, notably in the case of the Rural District Council and the Board of Guardians), and friction and obstruction are only too common. On the other hand the County may keep certain services in its own power. Thus Health Visitors, acting under the County Medical Officer, are allocated to definite parts of the County, irrespective of Rural District boundaries. Under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913, again, the County Council is the sole authority, to the exclusion of all the minor authorities within its area. In Scotland, the County is, generally speaking, in a more dominant position, mainly owing to the absence of Rural District Councils, and the small number of important Burghs, and the administrative machine tends to work in some respects more smoothly. The relations of the Counties and the larger Royal Burghs, such as Edinburgh or Dundee, are often as unsatisfactory as those of the Counties and County Boroughs in England and Wales.

(2) *The Executive Authority for the Rural Area.*—The Rural District, which took the place of the ancient "hundred" or "wapentake" was the creation of the Local Government Act of 1894. Its boundaries, generally speaking, coincide with those of the Poor Law Union, where that is wholly rural, or, if the Union area is partly rural and partly urban, with the rural portion. Where, however, the rural portion of a Union lies in more than one County, the part in each County is a separate Rural District.

The 661 Rural Districts in England and Wales vary very considerably in area, in population and in wealth. At one end of the scale there are vast districts like that of Hexham, in Northumberland, with a rateable value of nearly a quarter of a million pounds, and a population of more than 20,000 spread over nearly 200,000 acres, and at the other end minute areas such as Hambleden, in Bucks, with a population of less than 2,000, an acreage of 11,253, and a rateable value of £16,000. Another Rural District in Bucks, that of Eton, extends over 41,000 acres, and has a population of 23,435 (1911 census) with a rateable value of £212,644. As an instance of a Rural District with a particularly large population, we may quote that of Croydon, which has 63,931 inhabitants (1911 census) within its area of 19,523 acres.

Its executive authority, the Rural District Council, has considerable powers under the Public Health and Highways Acts, under the Local Government Act, 1894, and a number of miscellaneous statutes. Its members also act in a separate capacity as Guardians of the Poor for the parishes or areas they represent. Many Rural District Councils also exercise the powers of an urban sanitary authority, which may be conferred on them by the Central Authority, and which enable them to deal with offensive trades, streets, new buildings, lighting, public pleasure grounds, cabs and slaughter houses. All District Councils have two sanitary officers; the Medical Officer of Health and the Inspector of Nuisances, and generally a third also, the Surveyor, though occasionally these last two posts are held by the same person.

As regards finance, the Rural District Councils' expenses are of two kinds—"general" or "special." Under the first head come such expenses as are incurred for the benefit of the community as a whole—*e.g.*, officers' salaries, expenses of the establishment, the maintenance of highways, general charges connected with sanitation. These are paid from a common fund, raised out of the Poor Rate levied over the whole District by precepts addressed to the overseers. Special expenses are those which benefit particular inhabitants only, *e.g.*, the cost of a water supply or sewerage, and are a separate charge on the parish or place benefited. They come normally from the proceeds of a rate levied like the Poor Rate, but for which tithes, arable, pasture or meadow land, woods, market and nursery gardens, land covered with water, canals and railways, are assessed at one quarter of their rateable value. In certain circumstances, however, the Central Authority may order special expenses, though charged on a particular parish or place, to be raised in the same manner as general expenses.

When we come to examine into the powers possessed by the Rural District Council and the County Council respectively, we find a remarkable complication and often confusion. In some matters the County Council is the sole authority, in others it shares the administration of a service with the Rural District Council. In others, again, the Rural District Council is independent. The County Council, for example, has nothing to do with Town Planning, whilst the Rural District Council has nothing to do with the police, or education, or weights and measures,

or the mentally defective. On the other hand, the maintenance of highways is divided, main roads being the affair of the County Council and secondary roads of the District Council. But the most striking illustration is afforded by the housing question. The Rural District Council has the duty, *inter alia*, of ascertaining unfit houses, demolishing closed houses, making a housing survey; and it has power to erect houses, to make closing orders, etc. The County Council has powers to act in default of the Rural District Council in many of these matters, but it is thwarted by various limitations. If, for instance, a Rural District Council has failed to exercise its powers with respect to the provision of houses, the County Council cannot move until it has received a specific complaint from a Parish Council or Parish Meeting, or from four inhabitant householders in the District. On receipt of such a complaint, the County Council may cause a public local inquiry to be held, and, if it is then satisfied that the Rural District Council was in fault, may exercise the powers itself. An added absurdity here is that the County Medical Officer of Health may know, and even have informed his Council, that an insufficiency of houses exists in the particular Rural District in question; but this will not enable the County Council to take action, without the complaint of the Parish or four inhabitant householders. A slightly different method by which the County Council can exert pressure on a Rural District Council is given by another section of the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909. This enables it to complain to the Local Government Board that the Rural District Council has failed to exercise its powers, and the Local Government Board may then order a public local inquiry into the case, and eventually compel the defaulting District Council to do its duty. In practice there have been very few cases where the County Council has made use of this section.

Broadly speaking, it has been the tendency of recent legislation in the creation of new services to enlarge the powers of the County Council, and to neglect the Rural District. Instances of this may be seen in the National Insurance Acts, the Old Age Pensions Acts, the Mental Deficiency Act, and the Employment of Children Act. And even where the Rural District Councils are able to develop their own services, as, *e.g.*, in connection with provision for maternity and infancy, many of them are tending to merge their schemes into County schemes.

The criticism that has been increasingly levelled at the Rural District Council may be briefly summed up as follows:—it is objected that it has an artificial area, which means an absence of local patriotism, and, generally speaking, of cohesion; that it has too frequently a petty outlook and a parsimonious policy; that its officers are in many cases inefficient and reactionary (largely on account of their insecurity of tenure and underpayment); that its relations with the County Council are a constant handicap to efficient administration.

A word must be said here about the Scottish system. In Scotland, as has already been stated, the County is divided up into districts, each of which is managed by a District Committee, consisting of all the members of the County Council for that District, together with a representative

of each parish council in the area. The District Committee is a corporate body in its own right, and its Clerk is appointed by, and responsible to, it alone; but it is subordinated to the County Council in a way which the Rural District Council in England is not. It has no rate-levying power, but derives its funds from the County. And the County Council may regulate its proceedings in general. For certain services "special districts" may be established in particular areas, where necessary—(e.g., "special water districts," "special drainage districts"). The "special district" is, however, subordinate to the (County) District Committee.

(3) *Special Representation on Local Authorities.*—The principle of strengthening, or diluting, local governing bodies by the addition of a non-elective, or indirectly elected, element, has found increasing favour in recent years. In its earliest application it took the form of giving the elected body power to co-opt from outside, without any precise instructions as to who these co-opted members might, or might not, be. The Boards of Guardians from 1834 onwards included, in addition to their popularly-elected members, the Justices of the Peace as ex-officio members. In 1894, the ex-officio member was abolished, and the power was given to every Board to co-opt a Chairman, vice-Chairman, and two Members, the only limitation being that these persons must be qualified to be Guardians in the area. But in 1908 the Poor Law Commission found that only 218 out of 643 Boards had used their right of co-option at all, and none fully. Sixteen Boards had co-opted three members each, 120 had co-opted two members each, and 82 had co-opted one member each. The Majority Commissioners, who attributed the unsatisfactory working of the Poor Law largely to the unsatisfactory class of persons who administered it, expressed much regret at this failure of voluntary co-option, and recommended that "in future the members of the Local Authority should be largely nominated from amongst men and women of experience, wisdom and unselfish devotion to the public good."

Generally speaking, however, the addition of members from outside (save in the case of Aldermen on County and Town Councils) is not left to the discretion of the elected body. The Local Authority, by the Act of 1902, was required to include in its Education Committee a minority of co-opted members of educational experience and at least one woman. And this provision for securing to the community the advantage of expert knowledge has been developed in much of the succeeding legislation.

The Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, established Distress Committees which must contain not only members of the County, Borough or Urban District Council and Poor Law Guardians, but also "persons experienced in the relief of distress. . . one of whom must be a woman." The Mental Deficiency and Lunacy (Scotland) Act, 1913, lays it down that, if the District Board contains no women, it "shall co-opt not more than two women to be members of the Board," whilst the English law is even more elaborate, for every Committee for the Care of the Mentally Defective must include some "Poor Law Guardians or other persons having special knowledge and experience with respect to the care, control, and treatment of defectives, appointed by the Council as the Council

may determine, and of the persons so appointed some shall be women." The Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, gives the Local Health Authority power to appoint as members of its Maternity and Child Welfare Committee "persons specially qualified by training or experience in subjects relating to health and maternity who are not members of the Council," and it orders that at least two members of the Committee shall be women.

But there is another class of cases where the outside members come in in a rather different character—that is to say, not primarily, or at any rate not entirely, as persons offering their expert knowledge to the service of the community, but as the representatives of certain groups, professional or otherwise—of "interests," in short, claiming a voice in the management. Under the National Health Insurance Acts, for instance, the District Committee must contain a majority of members elected by the insured persons and deposit contributors, as well as doctors appointed by the County or County Borough Council and by the Insurance Commissioners. And a still more striking development has been made recently under the Scottish Education Act of 1918. Every Local Education Authority in Scotland must provide for the representation on its School Management Committees of the parents of the school children; for the appointment "on the nomination of the teachers engaged in the schools. . . or, failing such nomination, directly, of at least one teacher"; and "in the case of a School Management Committee having under its management one or more transferred schools [*i.e.*, voluntary schools transferred to the Education Authority], for the appointment thereto of at least one member in whose selection regard shall be had to the religious belief of the parents of the children. . . ."

It will be seen, therefore, that the idea of providing for representation on local governing bodies of persons qualified either by special individual experience or by professional function, has won acceptance in the legislature, though it may not yet have gone very far in practice. It is sometimes complained that organised labour has not been given its due place, but it must not be forgotten that most of the services of the Local Authorities are not concerned with matters in which Trade Unions, as such, have a peculiar interest. In regard to unemployment, the Local Authorities (apart from the Boards of Guardians) have up to the present no special functions. The Employment Exchanges and the Local Advisory Committees established under the Labour Exchanges Act, 1909 (which, of course, do contain representatives of organised labour), are regulated by the Ministry of Labour.

(4) *Finance.*—(a) *Rates.*—Nearly half of the total income of the Local Authorities is derived from the rates. In 1914–1915 the receipts from the rates by all the Local Authorities in England and Wales amounted to £73,733,826 out of a total, from all sources except loans, of £153,245,254. The remainder of the total was made up of Exchequer Grants, toll dues, fees, rents, etc., and various revenues from tramway, harbour, water, gas, electric and other undertakings.

The machinery of rating is briefly as follows.—In England and Wales

(the Metropolis excepted), the Poor Rate valuations are made in every parish by a committee of the Board of Guardians, called the Assessment Committee, which acts either alone or through the Overseers. Rateable value is an estimate of the net annual value of a house—*i.e.*, of the rent at which it "might reasonably be expected to let from year to year free of all usual tenants' rates and charges and tithe commutation rent-charge, if any, and deducting therefrom the probable average cost of the repairs, insurance and other expenses, if any, necessary to maintain it in a state to command such rent." Rateable value, it should be noted, includes, as well as houses, railways, tramways, gas, water and electricity undertakings, canals, shops, warehouses, offices, manufactories and agricultural holdings. In the case of agricultural land, however, it is not the rateable value, but the "assessable value" that is shown in the Valuation List—*i.e.*, the rateable value reduced by one-half.

The Valuation List is prepared by the Overseers and approved by the Union Assessment Committee, and it remains in force until it is revised by a supplemental list, or replaced by a new list. There is no statutory period for making new Valuation Lists outside the Metropolis. Certain rights of objection are given, to be heard by the Assessment Committee, and of appeal to Quarter Sessions or to the Local Government Board.

As regards the County Rate, the County Council has no power of levying rates directly from the ratepayers, but must serve a precept on each Board of Guardians in its area. In order to arrive at a uniform basis of assessment, the County Council may appoint a committee of itself, called the County Rate Committee, to fix the totals for the different parishes in the Unions. For this purpose the Committee may either adopt the Poor Rate valuation or make a new valuation of any parish or parishes.

The Poor Rate valuation is generally taken as the basis for levying the Borough and General District Rates (which, unlike the County Rates, are levied directly by the Council). The Borough Council may make an independent valuation, but seldom does so.

As regards London, the chief differences in the system are that (1) rateable value is defined as "the gross value after deducting therefrom the probable annual average cost of repairs, insurance and other expenses," the gross value being the annual rent which might reasonably be expected from a tenant, taking one year with another, for a house, if he paid all usual tenants' rates and taxes, and the landlord bore the cost of repairs, insurance and other necessary expenses; (2) the Metropolitan Borough Councils are the Overseers for every parish within their Borough; (3) a new Valuation List must be made for each parish every five years, corrections, if necessary, being made in the intervening period by Supplemental or Provisional Lists.

The collection of the various rates is a divided duty. The expenses of the County Councils, as has been said, as well as of the Rural District Councils (for highways and general expenses), are charged upon the Poor Rate, which is leviable by the Overseers. On the other hand, a Borough Council pays its expenses on roads, sanitary services, etc., and the Urban

District Council its expenses in general, out of the General District Rate. In some Boroughs, however, the highway and sanitary expenditure is defrayed from the Borough fund and rate, whilst Urban District Councils meet their expenses for education from the Poor Rate. Other expenses of Borough Councils are charged on the Borough Rate, which *may* be part of the Poor Rate, or, in some cases, as regards police expenditure, on a Watch Rate. There are also the "Special Expenses Rates" in Rural Districts, already referred to, and "Lighting Rates" to cover expenditure of Parish Councils on lighting. These two rates are leviable by the Overseers; whilst the General District Rate, the Borough Rate and the Watch Rate are levied and collected directly by the Councils. In London, a general rate is levied by the Metropolitan Borough Councils, and the spending authorities serve precepts upon them.

In Scotland, where the rates fall into three groups, parochial, burghal and county, corresponding to the Poor, Borough and County Rates in England, the machinery is somewhat simpler. Under the Valuation Act of 1854, a valuator or assessor was appointed for every Royal Burgh and County (the Police Burghs form part of the county for valuation purposes), and his valuation roll, revised every year, forms the basis for all local rates. But the Local Authorities may, if they choose, appoint Inland Revenue Officers as their own assessors, and in that case the same valuation does duty for local and national purposes. The majority both of the counties and of the Royal Burghs have, in fact, adopted this plan. As regards collection, there is, as in England, considerable duplication. Education rates, for example, are collected by the Parish Councils; county rates in the Royal Burghs by the Burgh, but in the Police Burghs by the County Council itself.

In order to reduce the anomalies and confusion of this machinery, the Departmental Committee on Local Taxation, in its Final Report in 1914, recommended (for England and Wales) that all valuations for rating purposes should be made by the Land Valuation Office (a Government Department created by the Finance Act of 1910), a right of appeal lying from that Office to Local Assessment Committees, and thence to a special tribunal, consisting of a practising barrister or solicitor and two eminent valuers, and that the collection of all rates in Urban Districts and Boroughs should be handed over to the Council.

But other and still graver difficulties arise from the inequalities of rating areas. A century ago, when practically every town and village was a more or less self-contained community, such local services as it had were confined pretty much to its own boundaries and affected its neighbours but little. But with modern economic developments the growth of traffic and transport and so on, there has inevitably come an enormous change. The local affairs and the local government of Blackburn—and even of Little Pedlington—no longer concern Blackburn or Little Pedlington alone. And there has steadily grown up a number of what have been aptly called "semi-national services," the administration of which calls for a greater degree of uniformity, of co-ordination and of actual intervention by the State itself, than could possibly be attained

under the old primitive system of local government. A natural result of this has been to compel the adoption of larger areas of rating and administration for various services, such as police, highways, education, or mental deficiency. Even so, however, the position is still serious. Attention has been constantly called to the drifting of the rich and the poor into separate districts, often enough side by side, but distinct as rating areas. Manchester and Salford, Hove and Brighton, Newcastle and Gateshead, are examples of this. The result is, of course, that the "necessitous area," as it is termed, with a low rateable value and at the same time needing a large expenditure on local government, must levy a high rate in order to carry out the necessary services. It is not possible, or proper, to discuss here the different methods, which have been tried or suggested, for dealing with this problem. One of them is, of course, concerned with the Grants in Aid of Local Authorities from the central exchequer, which will be referred to below. For the rest, it will be sufficient to mention the recommendations made by the Departmental Committee on Local Taxation. These are, very briefly, that special areas of charge for elementary education should be abolished, that the excessive cost of the present procedure for the extension of urban boundaries should be reduced, and that, so far as is administratively convenient, the County and County Borough should be the area of rating as well as of administration for all "semi-national" services.

(b) *Relation of Local and National Finance.* (i) *Grants in Aid.*—The grant out of the Central Exchequer of annual subventions towards the expenses of Local Authorities was unknown before 1832, and can hardly be said to have become a part of our financial system until 1846. During the middle part of last century the principal local services which received assistance from the State were police, poor relief (including the care of pauper lunatics), sanitary officers, main roads and elementary education. In 1888 an attempt was made by Mr. (afterwards Viscount) Goschen to simplify the relation between central and local finance by substituting a single Local Taxation Account for all the Grants in Aid then existing (with the exceptions of the Education Grant, the Grants to Industrial and Reformatory Schools, and the contributions in lieu of rates on Government buildings). By the Acts of 1888 and 1890, which set up this Local Taxation Account and determined of what it should consist, there was to be paid into it the proceeds of certain Licence Duties, of part of the Estate Duties, and of certain surtaxes on alcoholic liquors, etc., less Tithe Rent-Charge Rates (1899), which are deducted by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue out of the sums payable by them to the Local Taxation Account in respect of the Estate Duty Grant. To these revenues were added, by the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, a fixed sum annually in respect of the deficiency in local revenues then created by the provisions of that Act. Out of the Local Taxation Account had to be paid (a) practically all the multifarious Grants in Aid which had been instituted down to that date (except the pre-existing Education Grants to Industrial and Reformatory Schools); (b) certain additional grants towards police superannuation and education other than elementary;

c) the fixed grant to make up the deficiency in rates caused by the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896. By subsequent Acts, various other payments made by the Government (such as the expenses of measures taken against swine fever) have been charged to the Local Taxation Account, and the Grants in Aid correspondingly reduced. Somewhat similar provisions have been made with regard to Local Taxation Accounts for Scotland.

Apart altogether from these arrangements stood the direct Grants in Aid of Local Education Authorities, which rest upon the Education Acts and the regulations of the Board of Education for England and Wales, and the Scottish Education Department, and the Grants made by the Home Office under the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Acts (now codified in the Children's Act, 1908).

But modern economic changes and the development of public opinion have led in the last few years to a rapid growth of the Grants in Aid, especially on the national or "semi-national" services. By the year 1915, the total subventions from the National Exchequer to the Local Authorities in England and Wales (which, in 1870, was under £2,000,000, and in 1900 about £10,000,000) amounted to £23,160,815. And the sum, of course, has continued, and will continue, to rise with recent extension of the principle in the sphere of Public Health (*e.g.*, Grants in Aid of clinics, maternity services, treatment of tuberculosis and venereal disease), and the large subsidies promised in respect of housing in the near future. The bulk of these subventions, it is important to notice, do not pass through the Local Taxation Account, but are "monies voted annually by Parliament," and these represent a reaction against the Goschen system, and a return to the old plan of direct grants. Of the £23,160,815 mentioned above, only about eight and a-half millions came from the Local Taxation Account, and the proportion of the direct grants is steadily increasing. Thus in the Estimates for the current year (1919-1920), the Local Government Board is asking Parliament to vote £1,160,300 for grants to Local Health Authorities—an increase of £676,300 over the previous year. The grants in respect of child welfare show a rise from £230,000 to £400,000, and in respect of treatment of venereal disease from £250,000 to £300,000; whilst an entirely new item of over £400,000 appears for housing. Parliament is also asked for £850,000 for the treatment of tuberculosis in the United Kingdom (as against £670,000 last year), which sum includes special grants towards the cost of schemes undertaken by the Local Authorities, as well as the statutory grants under the National Insurance Act. Another significant, though small, demand is that of the Board of Control, Central Lunacy Authority, for £1,500 (as against £700 last year) to be given in Grants in Aid for research.

In conclusion, it is worth while to bear in mind, in considering this subject and the reforms which are necessary or desirable, a convenient classification that is commonly made. Grants in Aid are either (a) so far fixed in amount as to be independent of any action of the Local Authority receiving them; (b) varying in some relation to the amount spent by the Local Authority; (c) dependent on certain specific services being under-

taken by the Local Authority, but not increasing in proportion to the amount spent.

Among the fixed Grants may be included such items as the Deficiency Grants under the Agricultural Rates Acts, the proceeds of taxes on alcoholic liquors (or the Grants in lieu of these under the Finance Act of 1907) now definitely assigned to Higher Education, the Grants to Boards of Guardians based on the amount of certain expenditure in a particular year long past, etc.

The Grants dependent on the performance of certain services, but not varying in proportion to the expenditure of the Local Authorities, are mainly the Education Authorities' Grants and those to Industrial and Reformatory Schools.

The principal instance of the class of Grants varying directly with the expenditure of the Local Authorities was formerly the Police Grant, made on the basis of half the local expenditure on the service, subject to a certificate from the Home Secretary as to efficiency. But the tendency now is to put all the various new Grants, which are given in respect of certain services of the Local Authority, on this basis, so that 50 per cent. of the cost (or more in the case of housing), provided the Central Authority approves the scheme or administration in question, is borne by the State.

(ii) *Local Income Tax*.—Of the alternative proposals for the raising of local funds, the most important is the local income-tax. Such a tax has long been levied in France and in Germany. The French commune derives a large part of its revenues from direct taxes by the method known as *centimes additionels*. The sum required for local purposes is calculated as a percentage of the direct tax to be collected for the Department and the State (*e.g.*, if the latter amount is 100,000 francs, and the former 50,000, there will be 50 *centimes additionels*)—and the whole is levied together on the taxpayer, but the local treasury retains its own proportion. There are considerable differences in the application of this system, and in the proportion raised by different communes.

In Germany, as in Switzerland, there is a similar system, and it may be worth while to give a brief outline of the theory and practice in Prussia. (It must, of course, be remembered that in what follows we are speaking of the pre-revolution period; there is no adequate information yet as to any changes which may have been introduced since then. It will, however, be convenient to use the present tense.)

In Prussia, then, the income-tax is the most important of all the taxes both for the State and for the local authorities. As a rule, about half of the local revenue is raised by additions to the State tax. An attempt was at first made to prevent the encroachment of the local upon the State tax by statutory limitation of the amount which the locality might raise. The Prussian Local Taxation Law of 1893 laid it down that additions beyond 100 per cent. of the State income-tax must have the sanction of the Government, and the Government would require to be satisfied that all possible revenue was being raised in other ways, before giving its approval. But this attempt at restriction broke down almost universally,

and the statistics 12 years later showed that many towns were raising additions of 200 per cent., and some of over 300 per cent.

As regards the machinery, the assessment is managed jointly by the State and the commune; the collection, both of State and local tax, is in the hands of the commune.

Assessment is based on a personal declaration, full particulars being given of income from (1) capital (including speculation); (2) real property; (3) business; (4) other employment. All incomes from £45 a year upwards are liable to tax, which is elaborately graduated, and which must be in the same proportion both for national and local purposes. The income of husband and wife is reckoned jointly, and the income of children is included, unless it is derived from property over which the parents have no right, or from a child's own labour. Companies are assessed on their full profits, with a deduction of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—(for purposes of the State tax only: no deduction is allowed for the communal tax)—on the paid-up share capital to compensate shareholders for the double assessment resulting from their having to include the dividends in their own returns and to pay tax on them. Certain private limited companies (*Gesellschaften mit beschränkter Haftung*) are not allowed the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. deduction, but their members are not required to pay the State tax on the dividends they receive. Broadly speaking, a commune levies its income-tax on that portion of the profits of companies, businesses, etc., which arises within the communal boundaries. There are, of course, provisions in the law for the proper apportionment in cases of railways, forests, mines, and undertakings extending over several communes. As regards individuals, a person is not directly charged to local tax on foreign business income, but such foreign income will affect the amount he has to pay in the commune where he resides, since it comes into the calculation of total income, which determines the rate of duty.

The system, on the whole, appears to have worked well—largely, perhaps, on account of the thoroughness of the German official administration; for in Switzerland, where the central authority is weaker and less efficient, the results are not nearly so satisfactory. It is, however, pretty generally admitted that, even in Prussia, the duty collected in the lower income groups is hardly worth the cost of administration.

In this country the system is unknown, though it is interesting to observe that by the Statute of Elizabeth (43 Eliz. c.2), rates were intended to be in the nature of an income-tax. Practically the only trace of this principle, however, that remains is the rating of rectors and vicars in respect of their tithes, and even there it has been considerably blurred by modern legislation.

Proposals were laid before the Departmental Committee for the establishment of a local income tax, either as a complete substitute for the present rates, or as a supplemental source of local revenue. The Committee, however, reported against any such system, on the grounds of its administrative difficulties and of the likelihood of its interfering seriously with the usefulness of the national income-tax.

Appendix

R EPORT of Three-Day Conference at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on the Reorganisation of Local Government consequent on the establishment of the Ministry of Health and the Abolition of the Poor Law, 15th, 16th and 17th May, 1919.

This Conference was convened by the Labour Research Department and was attended by 320 delegates from Trade Unions, Trades Councils, the Labour Party, Local Labour Parties, Co-operative Societies, Professional Organisations, and other bodies. Amongst these were many Labour members of public bodies.

The Right Hon. J. R. CLYNES presided at the inaugural meeting. In his Chairman's remarks he insisted that Labour must give a lead on questions of local government. While they could not yet see any early disappearance of that section of the people whom they called the poor, they welcomed the disappearance of the machinery which up to now had charge of the welfare and destiny of the poor—the Poor Law Guardians, and very poor guardians many of them had shown themselves to be.

There had been a very costly and totally ineffective method of conducting local government. Immense sums had been spent upon institutions and their development. Public opinion was now coming round to the view that as few people as possible should be placed in institutions. Only in the most extreme instances should people be taken away from their relatives, home surroundings, and conditions and atmosphere which made life tolerable. Though it would be expensive to maintain widows in conditions of comfort in their homes, it would be less costly than their maintenance in institutions, because the cost must be counted not in terms of money, but in terms of the general effect of the system.

Mr. CLYNES said he had reached the conclusion that, defective as was our pre-war system of Cabinet government, it was far better and much more democratic than the system of government to which the war had driven us, and which was no better than the system of bureaucracy. This meant in practice that the heads of the great State Departments could individually do little. They introduced Bills, they helped to some extent to frame them, they answered in Parliament, but, individually, they were not responsible for those great acts of policy with which their names were associated. It would be an advantage to return to Cabinet government as compared with the conditions which prevailed now.

"It will not do," he declared, "for Parliament during this year to fail to respond to the very urgent needs of the masses of the people." We are promised housing schemes and many great reforms covered by the word reconstruction, but the summer is here, the autumn is to follow, and I fear that the winter will be on us again before actually we have begun the practical manual labour which alone can provide for those very pressing and urgent needs. We can well imagine what will be the state of our winter when we have a large number of unemployed existing quite close to the urgent demand for work, which statesmen have not yet been able to devise means to provide them with. There is nothing so convincing of our lack of statesmanship than the spectacle we have to-day of a million men and women, able with hand and brain, but idle. There is an enormous wealth going to waste through the idleness of persons of very considerable capacity, apart from the manual workers. It is nothing short of a scandal that we should have an enormous amount of idleness at a time when work alone is the factor, which can produce for us the repair of the ravages of war, and can begin and complete the great work of reconstruction which has yet to be started."

Mr. SIDNEY WEBB then delivered an address on the Coming Revolution in Local Government. His address is reproduced as the introduction to this booklet.

Thereafter the Conference met in separate sections, dealing respectively with Housing, Public Health, Unemployment, Medical, Educational, Constitutional and Finance.

HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

LORD HENRY BENTINCK, M.P., presided. Captain RICHARD REISS (of the Garden Cities and Town-Planning Association) outlined a proposed new scheme of administration of the Housing Section of the Ministry of Health. The scheme depended on a separation of questions of policy and administration from the technical questions of house production. In this way the present

congestion of business at Whitehall would be avoided and the machinery of housing speeded up. The scheme also provided for eleven district Housing Commissioners, each with an expert staff. Dr. LEONARD HILL delivered a paper on Public Health in relation to Housing, in which he gave striking statistics to show the deleterious effects of the bad housing and conditions of the industrial population. The only complete solution was the creation of garden cities. Miss ENID ORANGE (of the Women Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors Association) dealt with the necessity for a uniform Qualification for sanitary inspectors, and urged that they should be directly appointed by the Ministry of Health.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY presided. Mr. DAN IRVING, M.P., who was to have opened the discussion was unable to be present. Mr. G. D. H. COLE strongly criticised the Government's policy with regard to Unemployment. The problem of Unemployment fell into two main parts—(1) Prevention, and (2) Relief. Prevention depended on a regularising of the issue of public contracts, local and national, so as to make the level of employment uniform over a period of years. Relief (which had been hitherto provided for by the machinery of Part II. of the Insurance Act and by the Distress Committees under the Act of 1905) must be based on the idea of maintenance. Any scheme of maintenance must be universal, but not uniform—*i.e.*, it must allow for particular industries to establish their own scheme so as to enable the Trade Unions to undertake administration.

In the subsequent discussion the point was made that unemployment could not be wholly prevented so long as the profit-making system continued. The relation between town and agricultural labour was also raised, and the possible effects of a reduction of hours considered.

MEDICAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

The Medical Section held four sittings under the presidency of Dr. KERR. The first two dealt with the provision of a medical service in relation to maternity and infancy, and to the treatment of school children. Dr. ETHEL BENTHAM put forward the demand for a national free medical service in place of the contributory system of the Insurance Act or the dabbling of philanthropic health committees. What was needed with regard to maternity was a system of maternity homes all over the country that should be small and well within reach of people's homes, and, further, provision for housekeeping attendance during the disability of the mothers. Dr. LETITIA FAIRFIELD described the existing position of the School Medical Service and the changes contemplated under the new Act. What had existed so far was a very considerable system of inspection, but this inspection was only partially followed by treatment. Treatment was now to be compulsory, and great possibilities were thus opened up by the hope of a complete medical treatment for all children during their school period. Doubt, however, was expressed in the discussion whether the preventive side was sufficiently developed.

The remaining two sittings were concerned with the provisions for the sick and infirm. Professor BENJAMIN MOORE devoted his attention especially to the problem of the hospitals which were at present wholly inadequate. There were five patients waiting for every available bed. He advocated a national hospital system, supported by State grants in addition to the existing endowments and voluntary aid, but not run on bureaucratic lines. There must be considerable autonomy, and he instanced the position of the universities as a possible parallel. Mr. SIDNEY WEBB (in the absence of Dr. A. B. BYGOTT) dealt with the provision for the infirm aged and the chronically invalidated. He showed that no easy solution of indiscriminate pensions could settle the problem; the special treatment of each type of case according to the infirmity in question was needed. Such treatment would have to be national in scope, because the local areas were too small for the specialisation needed. In the discussion, while all agreed in condemning the present Poor Law system of indiscriminate treatment in the general mixed workhouse, objection was raised to any excessive institutionalism in treatment.

The Educational Section was concerned with the expansion of the work of the local Authority involved in the abolition of the Board of Guardians; its real subject was thus the method of replacing the Poor Law in the treatment of children rather than the educational sphere proper. Mrs. H. B. IRVING put forward the case for Widows' Pensions. She described the hopelessness of the present alternatives before the poor widow—the workhouse, separation from her children, or a degrading and inadequate poor relief under the autocratic administration of the Board of Guardians; and showed how the scheme of widows' pensions, the cost of which she

estimated at ten millions for this country, had already been put into practice in 35 out of the 48 States in America, and had been favourably reported on by the War Cabinet Committee on Women's Work. Discussions centred on the relation of women in industry to any scheme of pensions. Miss PENROSE PHILP dealt with the reorganisation of boarding-out. She strongly opposed institutional treatment, even in its improved form of the village community, and advocated the system of scattered homes. Dr. MARION PHILLIPS put forward the claim for a universal voluntary system of nursing schools so as to relieve the burdens of hard-worked mothers of households. The question was raised, however, whether the relief that was wanted was not rather in other directions, such as communal services, etc., so that the mother might be with her own child.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

This section held four sessions under the Chairmanship of Mr. DUNCAN CARMICHAEL and Mr. W. J. BAKER. Mr. REES JEFFREYS dealt with the necessity of larger areas in order to cope with the growing developments in traffic, health and other services. This could be achieved partly by amalgamation of urban areas, partly by unification for special services. To carry out these necessary changes through the existing Parliamentary machinery was impossible, and his suggestion was the creation of a Permanent Commission of three members, one appointed by the Ministry of Health, one by the Ministry of Ways and Communications, and one by the Home Office, with powers to secure agreed schemes of readjustments in areas and boundaries. Mr. W. HARRIS presented figures showing that a very large proportion of urban districts contained less than 5,000 inhabitants. He showed how these small areas led to inefficiency in the conduct of local government, besides being the cause of gross inequalities of conditions between citizens of neighbouring districts. He, too, advocated the amalgamation of urban districts and considered that a Select Committee of the House of Commons should at once be set up to inquire into the matter.

Lieut.-Colonel FREMANTLE (in the second session) dealt with the executive authority for the rural areas. The county, he said, should be made the main authority, and the rural district councils should be abolished. In its place there should be something like the Scottish system of district committees of the County Council, which itself should be enlarged to twice the size.

In the third session Mrs. SIDNEY WEBB spoke on the possible place for, and the necessary conditions of, special representation on certain committees of local authorities (such as Pensions or Education) for persons of particular experience and for organised labour, professional persons and women. The medieval basis of local government, which had lasted down to 1835, had been that services should be run by producers. The nineteenth century on the other hand had based local government on consumers' control and the principal of co-option (by which producers' representatives would have been admitted) was strongly opposed up till 1875. Since then the representation of producers and persons of special skill or experience had been increasing steadily, and during the war and the years immediately preceding it had been more and more adopted. The conclusions of her survey of historical and modern conditions was that the principle of co-option (aldermen, etc.) should be rejected, but that certain committees should contain an element of Trade Unionists and Professionals, provided that the dominance remained with the citizen consumer. This raised the very complicated problem of how the representatives were to be appointed. It was clear that no Act of Parliament could lay down the conditions. Schemes must be produced by each local authority. Mr. A. HAINSWORTH (of the Co-operative Union) emphasised the necessity for Labour and Co-operative representation, and insisted that the representatives should not be chosen at haphazard, but through the medium of their respective organisations. Dr. ALFRED COX (of the British Medical Association) agreed with the contentions put forward by Mrs. Webb, and further suggested that special representatives (who should report regularly) should be elected for two-year or three-year periods. They should appear not in a bargaining capacity, but purely from the standpoint of service to the community.

In the discussions on these three sessions strong objection was raised to co-option. The view was expressed by many speakers that special representation might prove a menace to democratic control, and it was felt that the only way to make local government safe for democracy was by instituting payment of members.

In the fourth session, allotted to questions of rates and taxation, the relation of local and national finance, grants in aid and local income-tax, Mr. ROBERT JONES, B.Sc., spoke on the general question of taxation both on its historical side and as related to present-day problems, and gave

a comprehensive survey of the principles underlying local and national taxation. The speaker dealt with nine "new ideas" in taxation—the graduated tax, the distinction between earned and unearned income, the superiority of direct over indirect taxation, the exemption of small incomes, the taxation of economic surplus, the local income-tax, the tax on capital, the family income, and taxation as a symbol of citizenship.

Miss SUSAN LAWRENCE (L.C.C.), after dealing briefly with the incidence of taxation, said that there were four means of relieving local taxation—(1) To increase grants in aid; (2) To rate estates on the fringe of towns on the same valuation as they would have if compulsorily purchased; (3) To set local authorities free to turn an honest penny on their enterprises; (4) To impose a local income-tax. The arguments for the last of these were unanswerable on grounds of justice and expediency. The arguments against were technical. It was impossible to collect it so long as there existed the present multiplicity of areas and rating authorities. If areas were enlarged and consolidated, the local income-tax would become practicable.

CLOSING SESSION

The closing session was held on the afternoon of Saturday, May 17, under the chairmanship of Mr. BERNARD SHAW. Mr. R. PAGE ARNOT, as Secretary of the Labour Research Department, presented a general review of the work of the various sections of the Conference. He announced the formation by the Labour Research Department of a special Local Government Section which would answer inquiries and issue a series of booklets on the problems of Local Government. The CHAIRMAN then delivered an address in which he surveyed some of the wider questions that had been raised by the work of the Conference. He showed how the crux of local government problems turned upon the question of national government. At present we had no national government; we had neither an English government for English affairs, nor yet a wider body specially chosen to deal with the bigger questions of foreign policy and finance. The consequence was that our domestic affairs were choked and blocked, and our foreign policy was in the autocratic hands of the Foreign Office. To remedy this he advocated the principle of Federation, or what had been called the New Heptarchy. The speaker dealt with a number of other points covering a very wide field, and in conclusion thanked the delegates for a very successful Conference.



The Labour Research Department

THE Labour Research Department is an association of inquirers into social, industrial, and political problems. Full membership is open to all members of recognised Labour, Socialist or Co-operative bodies. Others interested in the work of the Department may join as associates. In carrying out its research the Department co-operates with Trade Unions and Socialist and Co-operative organisations.

The work of the Research Department can be roughly classified under two main heads: that of collecting information and documents bearing on questions of interest to the Labour Movement, and that of rendering the information thus collected generally accessible.

The main sources of information are—1 A system of Press cuttings taken from all the leading newspapers and Labour papers and journals of employers' associations: files of many journals are also kept for reference. 2 A very large collection of Trade Union, Co-operative, Socialist, and other Labour documents, and also of Government reports and White Papers dealing with every matter of interest to Labour. All documents are filed and indexed, and are available for consultation by members and affiliated societies. 3 A number of local correspondents who report upon the state of industrial and political organisation in various districts. 4 Committees of Inquiry for the investigation of any subject of particular importance. Reports have already been published on the Co-operative Movement, Co-operative Production, the Organisation of Teachers and other Professionals, proposals for an international authority, etc. Committees are at present at work on the history, organisation, and work of Trades Councils and Local Labour Parties, Employers' Associations, the position of women in industry, international trade, the Workmen's Compensation Act, and the prison system.

There are a number of ways in which the information thus gathered may be rendered generally and conveniently accessible to members of the Labour Movement. We can give here only a few instances.

The Department collaborates with the Publicity Department of the Labour Party in the issue of a weekly LABOUR NEWS SERVICE, political and industrial. The Department acts as a general information bureau on all subjects of interest to Labour, and a large number of inquiries are dealt with daily. In particular, the Department has made a thorough study of war legislation and has thus been enabled to supply information and advice to many societies and individuals on the Munitions Act, Military Service Acts, etc. A special section for dealing with Local Government problems has now been formed.

Affiliated to the Department are 38 Trade Unions, representing about two million trade unionists, 100 Trades Councils, and 255 Co-operative Societies; also the Parliamentary Committees of the English, Irish, and Scottish Trade Union Congresses.

Particulars of affiliation may be obtained by associations or individuals interested from The Secretary, Labour Research Department, 25 Tothill Street, S.W.1

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

(Post free prices are given in parenthesis, except where otherwise stated.)

MONTHLY CIRCULAR

THE *Monthly Circular* deals with matters of interest to Labour legislation, legal cases, movements of wages and prices, the inter-history of the Labour Movement, actions of the Government and of the employers, etc. One free copy is supplied to each affiliated society and further copies at the following rates. To affiliated societies or their branches: 3d. per copy, or 2/9 per dozen, post free; to members of the Department or of affiliated societies: 3½d. per copy, or 3/6 per annum post free.

MEMORANDA

- Memoranda are issued at frequent intervals on subjects to which attention of the Department is directed by questions or investigations.
- 4 (April, 1918) Wages and Prices During the War. By Margaret Postgate. 1/- (1/1).
 - 7 (Nov. 1918) The Regulation of Wages During and After the War. By G. D. H. and M. I. Cole. 1/- (1/1).
 - 8 The Milk Trust and the Community. By A. L. Bacharach and R. Postgate. 3d. (3½d.)
 - 9 The Legal Regulation of Hours. By R. Palme Dutt. 6d. (7d.)

TRADE UNION SERIES

- 1 Trade Unionism in Germany. By W. S. Sanders. 1916. 7d. (8½d.)
 - 2 Trade Unionism on the Railways. By G. D. H. Cole and R. Page Arnot. 1917. Cloth, 2/6 (2/9); Office Edition. Trade Union Edition: Paper, 1/- (1/2).
 - 3 (With the Fabian Women's Group.) Women in the Engineering Trades. 1918. By Mrs. Bernard Drake. Cloth, 2/6 (2/11); Office Edition. Paper (to Trade Unions and Women's Societies) 1/6 (1/8).
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